

## British Rule, and Rebellion



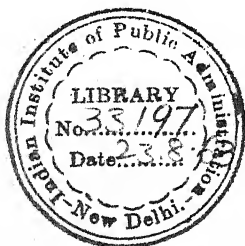


# British Rule, and Rebellion

BY

H. J. SIMSON

SECOND IMPRESSION



William Blackwood & Sons Ltd.  
Edinburgh and London

1938

IIPA LIBRARY



33197

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# CONTENTS

## PART I.

### IN GENERAL, RULE AND REBELLION.

| CHAP.                                 | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| I. RULE AND REBELLION . . . . .       | 3    |
| II. LIFE AND PEACE . . . . .          | 21   |
| III. SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE . . . . . | 36   |
| IV. SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID . . . . .    | 54   |
| V. SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER . . . . .  | 68   |
| VI. SUB-WAR—THE LAW . . . . .         | 83   |
| VII. SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW . . . . .    | 99   |
| VIII. SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION . . . . .    | 118  |

## PART II.

### IN PARTICULAR, PALESTINE, 1936-37.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| IX. PALESTINE . . . . .   | 131 |
| X. RULERS AND RULED . . . . .                                       | 151 |
| XI. AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW . . . . .                               | 170 |
| XII. REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-<br>MAY 1936 . . . . . | 183 |
| XIII. REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE<br>1936 . . . . .      | 203 |

# CONTENTS

| CHAP.   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| XIV. REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, JULY 1936 . . . . .      | 220  |
| XV. REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, AUGUST 1936 . . . . .     | 239  |
| XVI. REBELLION AND INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936 . . . . . | 252  |
| XVII. REBELLION AND THE ART OF YIELDING, OCTOBER 1936 . . . . . | 274  |
| XVIII. ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY . . . . .              | 289  |
| XIX. ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS . . . . .                     | 304  |
| XX. THE PURPOSE . . . . .                                       | 321  |

## PART I.

### IN GENERAL, RULE AND REBELLION



## CHAPTER I.

### RULE AND REBELLION.

THE story of rule and rebellion is as old as history and covers most of it. This book, however, deals with no more than a corner of the whole story, but a corner which concerns us and our history, since the Great War ended. During that period of twenty years, there has been encouragement of self-expression and a crop of rebellions, within the sphere of British rule. At the same time, there has been hesitation on the part of the ruler to apply force, in striking contrast to the lack of hesitation on the part of the ruled to appeal to force. The most recent example of this state of affairs was provided in 1936 by Palestine.

The ruled clearly do not bar the use of force as an instrument of policy. The frequency with which they have resorted to force and the similarity in the way they have used it, in places widely separated, establish a case for

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

examination of the whole question of rule in face of rebellion and raise the question whether rule has become more difficult or less efficient. Rebellion is a form of war and resort to force within the sphere of British rule is violation of peace where peace should be safe.

Two principles of peace are, that disputes must be submitted to judgment and not decided by force, and that the decision of the judges must be loyally obeyed. Success in the application of these two principles depends on redress of grievance and on readiness to oppose force by force, on the part of the ruler. No alleged slowness to redress grievance should be allowed to excuse resort to force on the part of the ruled, or there must inevitably be a spate of excuses and not much peace.

The Arabs in Palestine blandly claim that they had to stage a fifth rebellion before steps were taken to judge their dispute with the Palestine Government. Apart from the merits of that claim, the fifth rebellion did produce the Royal Commission, and the Royal Commission produced a recommendation in favour of partition. But the Palestine Government had a hand in the rebellion because, without that particular government, there might have been



## RULE AND REBELLION

no rebellion, or one so short that H.M. Government would not have been stirred to obtain the appointment of a Royal Commission before it ended. Given a strong government in Palestine the Arabs might never have been allowed to rebel, and H.M. Government might never have been allowed to go on ignoring their grievances. In fact, the whole case might then have been submitted to judgment without any resort to force.

However, it is questionable whether modern methods of government as practised by Britain would allow the appointment, or the continuance in office, of a governor capable of making H.M. Government appoint judges to hear a dispute in time, and also capable of suppressing a rebellion. Ability to suppress a rebellion without the other ability would not be enough. That, as the Royal Commission makes quite clear, would merely be putting off the evil day.

Improvement in the arrangements for hearing disputes is one problem, improvement in the arrangements for dealing with resort to force is another. It is with the second of these two problems that this book deals. It would be difficult to pretend that the arrangements which

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

exist to-day in 1937 for hearing disputes are so bad that delay could be accepted as an excuse for resort to force. It would be no service to peace to make such an admission.

To-day, thinking people are deeply concerned with the problem of peace, and practical people may find a solution where pacifists would fail. One direction in which practical people might direct their energies is towards improvement in the arrangements for hearing disputes. Another direction, the one with which we are here concerned, is towards improvement in the methods of dealing with resort to force. There are good reasons for directing attention in the latter direction first. To begin with, the arrangements for dealing with resort to force are worse than are those for hearing disputes, and they are more likely to be tested. Then there are in the world people who would resort to force in preference to submitting their case to judgment, if they thought that force would get them better terms. There are also people who would resort to force sooner than accept a judgment which they did not like. These two types have given us plenty of rebellions inside the British Empire since the end of the Great War, and there is reason

## RULE AND REBELLION

to expect them to give us more. Finally, inefficiency in dealing with resort to force encourages it.

The inefficiency displayed in Palestine last year was alarming, but it was not the duty of the Royal Commission to investigate the manner in which rebellion was dealt with by the Palestine Government. The Report makes that point clear in the first paragraph of Chapter IV. There is no indication yet of any intention to hold an inquiry into the methods adopted to deal with rebellion, and that too is alarming, because it entails a regrettable loss of experience. H.M. Forces resist and fight rebels. The Army in particular gains wide experience in constant contact with rebellion. But the policy governing its action emanates on one occasion from one Government Office in Whitehall and on the next from another, with the result that the forces which have to deal practically with rebellion seem always to be controlled by amateurs.

There are other good reasons for inquiry into the events of last year in Palestine. After all, some three hundred people were killed in fighting, or were murdered in the Holy Land, and about thirteen hundred were wounded. These figures

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

are probably an underestimate. It is stated in Chapter IV. of the Report of the Royal Commission that it has been credibly estimated that the Arabs lost one thousand killed, mostly in fighting, as very few Arabs were murdered. The British casualties in the three Services were at least 21 officers and men killed and 104 wounded. Among the Jews, 82 were murdered and 369 were wounded.

Such loss of life seems to require some inquiry when it happens in a country under British rule in times of international peace. Had anything much less serious in loss of life occurred in a colliery disaster in this country, there would have been a searching inquiry. In one respect there are stronger grounds for inquiry into failure to rule a country than there are for inquiry into failure to manage a colliery without loss of life. In the case of a colliery, one weak link in the security plan may bring disaster in a flash without any warning, and often without indication that the link was weak. In the case of a country which has to be ruled, that lack of warning is rarely a danger. There are always indications of trouble brewing, and they are usually spread over a long period. Even after resort to armed action has begun, the

## RULE AND REBELLION

course of events usually resembles a slow burning rather than a sudden and violent explosion. There is, in fact, still ample time to take steps to establish control. Failure on the part of those responsible for ruling and keeping order in a country is therefore relatively inexcusable.

Inquiry into the root causes which brought about rebellion is a thing quite distinct from inquiry into the manner in which rebellion was met. Unfortunately, there seems to be a tendency to gloss over the latter and focus attention on the results of the former type of inquiry. There is something hardly straightforward about that policy of glossing things over. It seems likely, however, that it will succeed, because so much time has already elapsed since the events which demand inquiry took place.

As long ago as January 1937, 'The Times,' in a leading article dated the 25th of that month, expressed the hope that there might be some explanation of the many failures to preserve reasonable order in Palestine during 1936. The leading article, which was headed "The Palestine Inquiry," in conclusion, said:—

"Granted that such uncompromising elements

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

as the Zionists and the Arabs were certain to collide, it was surely the business of the local Administration, which represents the Mandatory Power, to anticipate and prevent or at least restrict the conflict. The members of the Royal Commission have doubtless made good use of their secret sessions to discover how it was that a riot followed by a general Arab strike was not prevented from degenerating into a rebellion, which only collapsed when two British divisions, reinforced by their reservists, had been concentrated in the Holy Land. They may now understand the motives which prevented the declaration of martial law at a time when murders of Jews, or of Arabs who stood by the Government, were of almost daily occurrence, when detachments of British troops were frequently ambushed, and when roads and railways were being continually damaged. Certainly they must be in a position to throw light on the long-standing failure of the Administration either to disarm the country or at least inflict deterrent penalties on the holders of unlicensed rifles; on the notorious conflict between the Executive and a section of the Judicature; on the circumstances in which armed bands were able to enter Palestine

## RULE AND REBELLION

from other countries, and, after being finally surrounded, were allowed to withdraw unscathed. It is to be hoped that an explanation of these and other mysteries will appear in their Report."

We now know that none of these mysteries will be explained in the Report of the Royal Commission, for the good reason that it was not the duty of the Commissioners to investigate them. The problem of rule in face of rebellion, however, remains a problem which still requires close attention and solution, for the sake of the reputation of British rule. There is no doubt whatever that the reputation of that rule was torn to shreds by the events of last year in the Holy Land. Apart from the contempt rained upon it by Arabs, Jews, and foreigners in Palestine, account should be taken of the effect on the relations between the forces of law and order and the civil power.

It would be unfair to the Government of Palestine to suggest that it is solely to blame for the futilities displayed so recently in the land which it has to rule. There are root causes underlying its failure to deal with rebellion, just as there are root causes underlying the success with which the Arabs staged one. A

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

disturbing feature of this most recent failure is that it is not an isolated case. There is no reason whatever to suppose that we have made any progress in the last sixteen years in ability to deal with well-organised rebellion on modern lines. The lack of progress is in no way due to lack of force.

One reason for this defect is perhaps due to lack of public interest in the art of ruling others, possibly in turn due to lack of information. We are mainly interested in how we are ruled ourselves. One of the principles of good government is good understanding between rulers and ruled. Most people in Britain, knowing that principle by instinct, probably regard disturbance or rebellion as evidence of something the matter with the ruler, rather than with the ruled. Sympathy in this country is never bestowed on those who insist on ruling as they think fit, when that means the suppression of the reasonable aspirations of the ruled. Our sympathies, in such cases, invariably go to the rebels. Possibly, we have in the past had so many opportunities of expressing sympathy in that direction that we have formed a habit and have not yet had enough practice in distinguishing between the rebel, who is using force



## RULE AND REBELLION

in desperation to secure a long-deferred aspiration, and the more modern rebel, who is staging an outrageous racket.

Lack of interest in a dull and unpleasant subject, which directly concerns very few people, the suppression of rebellion in the imperial sphere, may be due to the demands which the international sphere to-day makes on our attention. It is natural to direct attention to the problem of preservation of international peace, in preference to the problem of imperial peace, when the consequences of failure in the international sphere affect us so directly and so dangerously, while failure in the imperial sphere has no such immediately unpleasant consequences.

Whatever the reason, there appears to have developed since 1918 a marked contrast between British action in the international sphere and British action in the imperial sphere. In the international sphere Britain has expended a great deal of energy in support of the League of Nations and in favour of the submission of all disputes to judgment. She has even proclaimed her readiness to adopt stern measures in opposition to any Power which resorts to force in its own interest, provided, however,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

that other nations, believers in peace, do the same.

In her own imperial sphere, on the other hand, Britain has adopted a bewilderingly easy-going attitude towards factions or races which take up arms and appeal to force in their own interests. So much is this the case that it seems that she positively encourages resort to force where she governs. One can hear it said to-day, all the way from the Far East right home to the front door, that if you want to get something out of the British, the best and quickest way to get it is to start shooting.

The records of the past year in Palestine must have encouraged belief in the truth of that statement. In Southern Ireland that theory was put into practice with success. In China, action based on the same theory got us out of Hankow, if not out of Wei-hai-wei. In India, Burma, Ceylon, Iraq, Egypt, and now in Palestine, practice of that theory has pushed things in the direction in which believers in violence wanted them to go. The Arabs in Palestine were openly proclaiming their belief in that theory in the period between the official end of the late rebellion and the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission.

## RULE AND REBELLION

It appears, therefore, that in the international sphere Britain proclaims her readiness to frustrate appeals to violence, in spite of the fact that she still lacks the requisite force. As a result, her proclamation is unconvincing and sometimes irritating. In the imperial sphere where she has enough force, she emphasises conciliation and suppresses any mention of sanctions till it is long overdue. Then, when she has to use force to frustrate appeals to violence, she seems to be quite incapable of using it effectively. This is all the more bewildering when, to-day, the modern rebel is becoming more and more prone to stage a racket than to seek redress of wrongs when he resorts to force.

One reason for this weakness has its roots deep in the party system of government, which prevails in Britain. That is a fact which has to be taken into account in seeking a solution for the difficulty, and it is not a fact which can be removed. Whenever there is an outbreak of violent resistance to government in any place under British rule, grave embarrassment is caused to ministers and supporters of the government at home. Reporters flock to the place, and the papers throw it and its problems

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

into their headlines. Interested people begin to pull political strings. The give-everything-away people shout their slogans and claim that all the trouble is due to not having given the place away. The hold-all-we-have people shout their slogans. Pro-Jews with political influence organise to make it effective. Pro-Arabs do the same. In no time the point at issue, which should have priority over all others, the prompt stopping of resort to force, is lost to sight entirely.

The 'troubles' in Ireland in 1920-21 afforded a glorious example of the pandemonium which can be created in political circles when it becomes necessary to use H.M. Forces extensively in opposition to murder, intimidation, and ambush. There was a continual bombardment of questions in Parliament, and streams of misrepresentation and accusation poured forth. Part of this political trouble seems to be due to the system whereby all politicians depend for political existence on success in a competition for votes, while those who hold office depend in addition on success in a competition for votes in Parliament. Riot, insurrection, and rebellion all open a fine field for criticism of every kind, for being weak as well as for being strong.

## RULE AND REBELLION

Some of the criticism is made with an eye for the main chance, votes. In general, the government is thrown on the defensive, and its store of votes becomes vulnerable. The opposition, in fact, stands to gain.

As a result of this state of affairs local administrations are prone to avoid any clash which might attract undue attention in Britain, and, if it comes to a clash, do all they can to gloss it over. This they do, partly from a belief that the less a democracy knows about happenings in its distant possessions the better, and partly out of fear of reproof from an embarrassed Cabinet at home.

Palestine had the advantage over Ireland of being farther away from London, and questions were no doubt easier to parry. Most of the Arab accusations against the Palestine Government were made in the local press, and most of their accusations against the troops were sent direct to the High Commissioner. Nevertheless, the troops were accused in the House of Commons of behaving in the best traditions of the Black and Tans, and, as the Report of the Royal Commission on page 104 states, "the dropping of poisoned sweets from aeroplanes was one of the least outrageous charges made."

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

These various causes lead to the result that when a rebellion breaks out, the Secretary of State concerned tends to be very chary in the delegation of powers to those on the spot, responsible for dealing directly with rebellion, while the local governor tends to follow his example and impose all manner of restriction on the action of the troops.

From the point of view of the fighting man, this is all very bewildering. He is just the same man as may be seen any day walking about the streets at home in uniform or in plain clothes. He is really a normal average inhabitant of Britain. He is also the being who is hailed as the ambassador of peace when he comes back from places like Silesia or the Saar. Yet, when he has to go into action against those who take up arms to gain what they want by force, within the British Empire, he is likely to be called a brute. His whole nature, in some mysterious way, can be totally changed when somebody seeks to gain a political advantage over somebody else.

This tale is becoming almost as long as one of our rebellions. It has touched on the root causes of rebellion, delay in redress of grievances, the contrast between policy in the international

## RULE AND REBELLION

sphere and policy in the imperial sphere, and the lack of public interest in the subject. It has mentioned the losses which rebellion entails, the political repercussions, the restrictions placed on the action of H.M. Forces, and the accusations made against them. It has suggested that our ability to deal with rebellion has made no progress in the last sixteen years in spite of practice ; in fact, that ability is lacking in that respect. It might go on to point out that we are perhaps the greatest world power which has ever existed. We pose as a protagonist of peace from altruistic motives and expose ourselves to the accusation that our motives are material, because we own so much and need peace to keep it without trouble. We seem unable to keep peace among those who live inside our rule, but keep on lecturing about peace to those who live outside it. In fact, neither we nor our arrangements are easy to understand.

It is time, however, to make an effort to be constructive. We cannot be sure that we may not have to deal with rebellion again in one or other of those parts of the Empire which lie within the sphere of the India Office and the Colonial Office. Rebellions in the past seem to have lasted too long and to have cost too

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

much in life and money. For the sake of the future there is, therefore, a case for the examination of the problem of rebellion, both from the point of view of the rebel and from that of the man who has to deal with him. Then it may be possible to discover what principles are involved and what lines of action lead quickly to a solution.



## CHAPTER II.

### LIFE AND PEACE.

PRINCIPLES are rather dull and unattractive, perhaps because the solid rock is less decorative than the growth which obscures it. But principles, if correctly enunciated and applied, give a sound and solid foundation for both thought and action. It cannot be denied that we are living to-day in times of stirring interest, danger, and great confusion, both in the international sphere as well as in the imperial sphere, even if we limit attention to the rival claims of nationalism and internationalism, conciliation and sanctions. Something sound and solid seems desirable.

As far as we ourselves are concerned within this island we seem sound and solid, and our peace contrasts with the unrest elsewhere. But we have rearmament to remind us that there is an outside world and, of late, our armed forces show a tendency to be less and

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

less able to stay in their home stations. In recent years considerable parts of the Army, which would normally be inside Britain, have been drawn away to Silesia, the Saar, China, Egypt, and Palestine. Within the last eighteen months we have had to send one of our five divisions to Egypt on account of our relations with Italy, and two of them to Palestine on account of rebellion against our rule. In fact, the balance between force at home and force abroad has broken down.

To-day a brigade of the 1st Division and a battalion, in addition to the normal garrison, are gripped in Palestine, as a mere advanced guard, in case there should be a refusal to accept the judgment which is soon to be delivered on the dispute of last year. In the statement of policy announcing general agreement with the conclusions of the Royal Commission, H.M. Government has said that if serious disorders should again break out, of such a nature as to require military intervention, the High Commissioner will delegate full powers in respect of the whole country to the G.O.C. the military forces.

So it is clear that there is an element of danger to peace even in the announcement of a decision,

## LIFE AND PEACE

because interested parties dislike it and the changes which submission to it must involve. From past and present evidence it seems that the peoples and races of this earth want to get what suits them, more or less regardless of the interests of others. But there are many firm believers in peace, and what they want is progress without resort to force. Their difficulty is that it seems to be necessary to use force to get it.

If one turns to principles for guidance through these confusions, two facts seem to stand out through all the history of human affairs, in every variety of circumstance. The first is, that everyone has a self, which has to be served. The better it is served and the fitter it is, the more use it is in general. The second is, that nobody has ever done much as an individual self. To get anywhere we have always had to band ourselves with others of like interest and purpose. It seems then reasonable to define the principles of life as service to self on the one hand, and service to something greater than self on the other.

As usual, there is conflict between even these two principles. Service to self indicates the purpose of continued and, if possible, better

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

life. But service to something greater than self may demand, as in war, service to the extent of the complete elimination of self. That latter service to the greater interest has usually dominated. The limit in scale of that greater interest terminates as a rule at the boundaries of the nation. Though efforts have been made to extend the limits, there seems to be a tendency to revert to normal.

These two principles of life cover all conditions of life in peace and war. They are just as essential to the continued existence and cohesion of conquering killing hordes, like those of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane, as they are to communities of Quakers. By themselves they are no guide to peace. What is required may be found in the evolution of order out of force and of law out of order.

Order was created in the past by the strong commander, backed by a band of strong men, united in service to something greater than self, their common cause. As order endured, custom in the maintenance of it emerged, and out of custom there developed law. To-day, in Britain, our peace is based on the general acceptance of two principles, that disputes must be submitted to judgment and that the decision

## LIFE AND PEACE

of the judge must be obeyed. As already suggested, these two principles are principles of peace.

These four principles, the two principles of life and the two principles of peace, seem to bear on the problem of life with peace. The difficulty is to strike the correct balance between all four. It is interesting to see the ways in which balances have been struck by different peoples since the Great War.

The League of Nations began by basing itself almost exclusively on the two principles of peace and ignoring the two principles of life. It is beginning to readjust itself. It is to be hoped that it may succeed because, when it does, it should exercise great influence as a buffer against war. Even should it fail to prevent war, it could continue to act as a vehicle for the expression of the general world public interest in the matter in dispute.

In Britain there was at first, after the war, a revulsion against that disciplined co-operative service to something greater than self, which had been demanded in particular of young life, and seemed to end only in premature and useless death. At the same time there was a tendency to emphasise service to self alone,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

combined with very strong support for the two principles of peace. Everything seemed to be designed to dodge the hated principle of service to something greater than self. Three principles seemed to be accepted and one discarded.

In contrast to Britain those countries which were still under stress and still exposed to danger, after the war had ended, followed ardently the principle of service to something greater than self. They ignored the principles of peace and pinned their faith on the principles of life, paying particular attention to the principle of service which had cast the greatest strain on them during the war. Strong movements, based on the belief that the true life-interests of the nation were in danger, set out to save these interests by organisation and force. These movements succeeded in gaining national control and continue to focus attention on the second principle of life, in the interests of the nation.

Japan was diverted from the beginnings of interest in the principles of peace by the threat to what she regarded as her life-interests in Manchuria, where she had invested heavily both money and life. The attitude of the ruler

## LIFE AND PEACE

of Manchuria became increasingly hostile, and his activities with paper currency threatened Japan's economic interests. Further, the Chinese seemed to be relying on the security which League membership gave them to do what they did. The attitude adopted by the League after Japan resorted to force confirmed her tendency. The League stuck to the two principles of peace, and Japan stuck to the two principles of life, and they parted.

The Manchurian crisis shook Britain into a position of better balance between the four principles. The League machine began to move slowly, cog by cog, and it became all too clear that, if it managed to move far enough, Britain's navy would be the only available force which could reach, with difficulty, the required distance. Britain at once began to think of her life-interest. The Abyssinian crisis carried things further still, and showed how difficult it may be to get armed force for action in the public interest, when getting it means taking it from where it is required to guard the life-interest of the nation which owns it. France put France first, and such forces as Britain moved, she moved in her own interest.

Life, it seems, is a perpetual effort to balance

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

conflicting forces. The effort is perpetual because some change, in the form of growth or expanding experience, keeps on introducing new factors. Thus, when balance is very nearly attained, the whole performance has to be begun all over again. Though principles help by providing fixed points, the problem of striking the correct balance is complicated by the irksome fact that a solution which proves right in one set of circumstances may be quite wrong in another.

For example, when a man resorts to force and commits murder in Britain he is usually hanged, after the fact that he did commit murder has been established, and little attention is paid to the reasons he may produce to explain why he murdered. It is in the public interest that he should be hanged, and hanged he is, with no upset to anybody except his relations and those who have fixed ideas on the subject of capital punishment. But when a nation like Japan resorts to force, the circumstances are entirely different. In the first place, it is not possible to hang a nation. In the second place, no nation will stand being condemned without some attention being paid to its reasons for action. So the League, having no police and no army, has to pay attention to



## LIFE AND PEACE

the circumstances of the case, and may find it wiser to take account of the reasons given for the action taken, agree if possible with some of them and, by tact, endeavour to mitigate the rigours of the use of force. The League must be based on the principles of life as well as on the principles of peace. It cannot behave like a British jury and judge for facts and law.

The question arises, which line of action would be the more appropriate in dealing with rebellion within the British Empire, action on the lines of a British court, or action on the lines of the League's court? The case of Palestine brings this question into prominence, and it is right to concentrate attention on how we rule in our part of the world before inquiring how others rule in theirs.

British rule is neither harsh nor selfish. It is in fact a new form of rule leading to free co-operation by unequals. Because some peoples are still being led in the hope that they may soon become free and willing co-operators, the accusation is often made that British rule is dominating and imperialistic. That accusation ignores the purpose. It ignores the fact that on an international scale British rule is

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

an advance on anything which has been, in that it has moved forward from the idea of domination by force to the idea of free co-operation. We are, in fact, carrying out a great experiment, which has the disadvantage of being open to view when still only half done.

This experiment was challenged in the Great War, which was, in essentials, a fight between the idea of domination and the idea of commonwealth. The decision showed that the clock was not to be put back. But no sooner was that dangerous challenge out of the way than there arose a new challenge, this time from within. The rebellions which have taken place since the war reveal the extent and the nature of this new challenge. The challenge comes from impatient nationalism.

Within our sphere of rule it is not a question whether States which are not yet self-governing ever will be, if they want to be, it is only a question of when. The decision when, should be made presumably by Britain, on the test of fitness. But there is evidence of a tendency to wobble away from the purpose. There is a big difference between giving self-government to a people when they have had some practice under supervision, and giving office, with the

## LIFE AND PEACE

sweets thereof, to ambitious politicians who have never been elected, though they may be good organisers, and sometimes good intimidators. If the great experiment deteriorates into giving office to the ambitious for the sake of peace, it is not worth an obituary notice.

There are indications that the experiment is not very sure of itself. We seem to be producing rather an odd type of administrator. Some, especially among the junior ranks, seem to see so many points of view that their power of decision is apt to drown in their oceanic vision. They seem obsessed by the theory that it is impossible to rule without the consent of the ruled—a belief which handicaps them in countries where self-government is not yet a fact. They have been known to urge that a firm and prompt stoppage of resort to force would not look well if, on inquiry, it came out that those who rebelled had a grievance when they appealed to force.

There is idealism in the purpose of British rule, and it is a gentle rule. On that ground alone there is reason for firmness when firmness is necessary. The appropriate line of action in dealing with resort to force must be determined with reference to the circumstances of

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the case. The League, for reasons given, has to exercise tact if it is to do good and not aggravate the situation. But the circumstances of the League and of Britain are totally different. In the Empire and in British Mandates there are local police and local garrisons, with behind them the armed forces of Great Britain. There are thus always two governments, the local government and the central government, each in a position to stop promptly resort to force, whereas the League has neither police nor army. When the circumstances make it possible to stop resort to force, as they do in the case of the British Empire, it is in the public interest that it should be stopped, and stopped promptly.

Some people may disagree with that conclusion. It may be claimed that what has been said about principles shows that when a community feels that its life-interest is at stake it will turn from the principles of peace to the principles of life and will probably, in time, resort to force. It seems clear from the Report of the Royal Commission that the Arabs in Palestine have felt for years that their life-interest as a community was at stake. They rebelled. What made them feel as they did was done by the terms of the Mandate, not by

## LIFE AND PEACE

Britain alone, but by the whole League, including the U.S.A. But that, surely, suggests investigation of the arrangements for redress of grievance and the use made of them. It does not alter the fact that the circumstances did make it possible to stop resort to force at once.

Slowness in dealing with rebellion, whether due to lack of will to oppose it, or to inefficiency, lets loose other evils. The quick knock-out delivered on the party which seeks to gain its ends by force is inclined to eliminate all backers. Both the Jews and the Arabs had large bodies of backers outside Palestine in the rebellion of last year, just as there were large bodies of backers outside Ireland seventeen years ago. The longer the fight goes on the more likely are the backers to get out of hand, as they did in the cases of Palestine and of Ireland. Prompt action silences the worst of the backers and leaves the best of them free to concentrate on the grievance. Redress of grievance ought to be a road to peace, but it will never be a safe one if resort to force is to be regarded as a permissible way of expressing the grievance.

Finally, modern rebellion has assumed a form which makes its prompt suppression

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

essential. It has become a dangerous malignant growth which attacks the whole framework of government. It is subversive, stealthy, and secret, and depends for success on intimidation, which is described in the Report of the Royal Commission as "the foul disease which has so often defiled the cause of nationalism in other lands." Intimidation, in turn, depends for success on deliberate murder, carefully planned, after a long watch on the movements of the target, so that it can be done without risk to the perpetrators. Rebellion is too good a name for the thing. It is proposed to call it sub-war.

Sub-war existed in acute form in Ireland in 1920 and 1921. It has existed in India more recently, particularly in Bengal. It existed in acute form for six months in 1936 in Palestine, and exists there in latent form to-day. If it is in the public interest that resort to force should be stopped, when force is available to stop it, it is more than ever in the public interest to stop it at once when it takes the form of sub-war. The exponents of sub-war could never rule anything fairly. To yield power to them and pretend that the yielding is done for the sake of peace, is dishonest. It is better to break them first and then yield to someone else.

## LIFE AND PEACE

Unfortunately, no quick cure has yet been found for the foul disease, though it has existed for years. It is not the business of the armed forces to find the cure, for in withstanding the disease they have to act almost entirely in aid to the civil power. The civil power, however, seems to be unaware that it has a new problem to face in sub-war, which is a danger to the purpose of British rule, free co-operation. There is little doubt that it could find the cure if it tried. But, in case it may not feel inclined to move in the matter, it is proposed now to examine sub-war both from the point of view of the other side and of our side, with particular reference to the working of the four means of rule—civil, police, legal, and military. The cure seems to depend on good co-ordination of these four means of rule.

## CHAPTER III.

### SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE.

INTERNATIONAL war most people over forty know from personal experience. Civil war everybody can read about in its modern form, in the latest specimen from Spain. Sub-war, however, requires explanation. It is an organised use of force, partly under arms, designed to get something by force against the will of the properly constituted Government. Its leaders are invariably self-appointed and not regularly elected.

Sub-war lies half-way between a political strike on a national scale and civil war. It differs radically from civil war. In civil war, rebels bear arms openly and fight in military units organised on much the same lines as those of the government forces which they attack. In sub-war, every effort is made to use force under cover of the laws of the Government which is being attacked. Organisation is secret.



## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

Military formations are avoided as much as possible. Control is maintained by intimidation. When illegal action begins, it is controlled and co-ordinated by a central authority, but the onus is cast on government of proving, if it can, the illegality of each act, as if each were a disconnected deed done by some disgruntled individual. The thing is, in fact, a well-organised racket.

It is very necessary for the British people to know the general lines on which sub-war is conducted. They ultimately, through their own Cabinet and Parliament, and thence through local governments in places like Hong-Kong, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Palestine, rule many peoples which have not yet reached the stage of governing themselves. It is among these peoples that sub-war is most likely to arise. Since 1918, sub-wars have been rather common in territories under British rule. Perhaps the best example of all, and the one most skilfully managed by the other side, was the Sinn Fein campaign in Ireland in 1920-21.

The American rackets were a form of sub-war, though designed for personal gain and not for nationalist ends. Their history shows what is bound to happen if sub-war is not

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

recognised by government for what it is, and gripped firmly and promptly. Most people may have heard of 'G' men, an organised body of government servants, armed and authorised to shoot, without trial, outlawed citizens. Something of that nature is the logical outcome of failure by government to deal in time with sub-war. It is just a question of balancing conflicting forces. It took about fifty divisions on one side to balance and hold about fifty divisions on the other in France in 1914. It takes 'G' men to balance gunmen if they are allowed, through neglect, to break through all the outer defences.

Sub-war arises out of grievance, fairly well spread among a people. It is easy enough to sympathise with most of these national grievances. But, if peace is the aim, no grievance should be allowed to justify resort to force.

The Irish still have a grievance because of the plantation in North Ireland, some three hundred years ago, of an indigestible wad of people of a different race and creed from Scotland. They also grieved because of the seizure by Englishmen of almost all the estates in South Ireland. Long after these events, expanding experience led them to realise what

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

had happened. They then became nationalist, and for years tried to have their wrongs righted in Parliament. That method proved to be so maddeningly slow in producing the required result, home rule, that the foundations of taking by force were laid about 1906 and developed by 1920 into well-organised sub-war. The grievance stands out better if one stops to imagine how the English would enjoy having a plantation of South Irish in, say, Cornwall and Devon, or how the North Scots would welcome the infliction of a batch of Englishmen, with or without titles, as chiefs in the Highlands.

The Arabs of Palestine have their grievance over the plantation in the plains of Palestine of hundreds of thousands of Jews. The Arabs are perhaps as much related to the Jews as were the Scots who went to Ireland related to the Irish, but in each case the creeds and views of life differ. Roughly speaking, the Jews like towns, bustle, work, and organisation. The Arabs like the country and ease.

The basis of sub-war rests on grievance. But, the grievance has to be expressed. This is done, firstly, by people of greater than average education and of greater than average depth of feeling. They usually have rather romantic

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

poetical natures. They write and speak well, and organise not so well. They are useful, but would never get anywhere by themselves.

Provided that the grievance is real, those who first express it then manage to infect others who have a direct grievance, lack of land, lack of money, lack of employment, lack of something. When those who have a real grievance and not just the second-hand echo of a grievance, begin to be interested, a new set of leaders is thrown up. They are of a type very different from the original agitators, with whom they now form a bond of union. Idealists are now joined by realists to form a political group, and organisation improves.

No political group could, however, advance its cause any faster than the pace of normal legal political activity without the help of a militant group. Though all may agree that the pace of normal political activity is too slow, all will not agree about the next step. Many of the original idealists and some of the later joined political realists will shrink from the idea of direct action by force of arms, though quite willing to try a political strike. This hesitation will cause impatience to the verge of mutiny, and end by throwing up yet a

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

third group among the leaders, the militant realists.

In between the idealists and the militant realists sit the political realists. Some of them may not like the idea of force, but there will be others fully conscious of their happy central position and ready to take advantage of it. The idealists can be relied upon never to admit to themselves that shootings and murders are the logical consequence of their own acts, done since their discovery and nationalisation of the grievance. They will always maintain that such 'disorders,' as they will call them, are merely proof that the grievance is real, and so natural acts, though regrettable, on the part of the younger hot-heads. These idealists can therefore be trusted to stay in the movement. They will be most useful for misrepresenting facts. They will prove conclusively that it was the Government which first resorted to force by attacking the nationalists. They will use their skill to make the best use of these well-worn catchwords, imperialism and militarism.

Meanwhile, the militant group will be useful in forcing the pace. Its first need will be arms, and money to buy arms. The money is not, as a rule, so difficult to raise as the arms. The

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

political realists will find little difficulty in providing good causes to which loyal nationalists would naturally subscribe, such as a strike fund, a fund for the dependants of political prisoners, or hunger-strikers, or a coloured cross or crescent fund. As long as the idealists do not know where all the money goes, no crisis is likely to arise. Even when it becomes obvious that the militants are part of the organisation and a drain on its funds, there is always in reserve the slogan of keeping the front united and not letting the enemy divide and rule.

So, by virtue of their position in the middle, the political realists control. It is, as a rule, from amongst them that the leader of the whole movement is chosen. If it is possible to find a leader who looks like an idealist, but really is a realist, so much the better. It is a great advantage to have the cloak of religion or mysticism to hide a real Mufti or a Gandhi. In any case, the political leaders will normally protest that they abhor violence and are doing their utmost to control their young men and extremists.

That plea of abhorring violence can be relied upon to diddle any British Government, which, for some reason, will never allow drastic action

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

to be taken against the political leaders of a rebellion conducted on sub-war lines. It will never adopt the attitude that those who lead a movement which results in murder are themselves liable to be tried and found guilty of murder. Even when political leaders went on the run, as in Ireland, government officials chased after them, not to arrest, but to keep in touch and discuss. In Palestine the political leaders never bothered to go on the run, there was no need. The Government was suffering from a fixed idea that they all abhorred violence, and said so for them.

Meanwhile, the militant group should be forcing the pace. To keep its organisation and membership secret, it has to organise intimidation from the beginning. Intimidation helps in the collection of funds and ensures the early isolation of 'traitors' and 'informers.' It also provides cover for the difficult business of collecting arms. The collection of arms should normally be the most difficult of the problems to be solved. In Ireland, even in 1920, the Sinn Feiners were still raiding country houses for anything in the way of arms they could find. In India, about 1931, large sums had to be paid for revolvers smuggled in by

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

members of ships' crews. But, in Palestine, the Government had never bothered about that elementary rule of government, the strict control of arms, so the rebels there had no arms problem to solve.

Once a working minimum of arms has been obtained, these can be used to gain more. Then, as a rule, the next step is to concentrate militant activity against the police, with the object of forcing them out of the field as police, and, while that move is in progress, of gaining more arms.

A police force depends for effect on ability to live dispersed in small groups among the people, in order to keep in close touch with them and gain information. When a crime is committed the police send individual men about to make inquiries, designed to lead to knowledge as to the person who did the deed and as to where he may be. Then as soon as that knowledge is gained the police organisation quickly concentrates superior force at the decisive point, the wanted man, and he is arrested.

Normally, police work among people who support normal conduct and oppose murderers, thieves, kidnappers, blackmailers, and intimidators. So, from the point of view of the militant group in sub-war, two things stand



## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

out to be done : first, to prevent the police from living comfortably dispersed in touch with the people ; and secondly, to prevent the people from behaving normally. In the latter direction they start with an advantage, because the intensely political nature of the situation reduces the number of morally normal persons, and so reduces the risk of information reaching the police.

The militant group then sets to work to out-police the police, by concentrating superior force at the decisive point, the wanted policeman. It does not take very many shots to stop individual police movement over a wide area. In no time the police take to moving about in threes. An attack or two on isolated police barracks, even if not pressed home, will make them post more sentries on every barracks, and help to reduce their effective strength. At the same time, one or two successful ambushes of police patrols will secure more arms. These methods, combined with occasional sniping of police barracks, will soon reduce the effectiveness of the police force to about one-sixth of what it was when the militant attack began. The police will soon begin to move about in sixes.

If it is possible to do that to an armed police

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

force, as it is by sub-war methods, it is obviously much more easy to intimidate witnesses. The law being riddled with rules, a witness must be warned to give evidence days ahead, the names of witnesses must be given to the other side, the evidence of the witnesses must be given openly, practically in public and probably repeated at length in the press. Then the witness goes home and lives exposed. To exert pressure on witnesses so that they either do not give evidence at all, or forget what they were going to say when they reach the witness-box, is easy.

By the time the police have been forced to concentrate, the battle against them as police has been won. That is so because they are reduced seriously in efficiency and are blinded and unable to gain information. In fact, they have been forced to play the part of soldiers, moving always armed and in patrol formations, and guarding always the stations in which they live. It does not need a large force of armed rebels to bring about that state of affairs. In fact, the rebel numbers are always very much less than those of the police force which they neutralise, and continue to neutralise, as long as the soldiers proper keep out of the game.

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

No government could submit to the elimination of its police, as police, without taking action. But a government cannot increase its police forces by three times the original number, and certainly not by six times. It would take months of correspondence to obtain Treasury sanction, even if the thing were possible. So the government does the only thing which it can do: it calls in the soldiers.

We are not concerned at the moment with what should be done with the soldiers, but only with what is done, or is likely to be done. As a rule, a government which is being attacked by sub-war methods, concentrates its attention on getting its police back into working order as police. It first seeks the advice of its chief of police as to how this may be done. He very naturally emphasises the importance of keeping the police network well spread over the country, in order that the police may regain their former close touch with the inhabitants and so obtain information. He urges that troops should be used in support of the police to free them from protective duties and patrols. This sounds perfectly reasonable and, accordingly, the troops are dispersed in small detachments about the country.

Once troops are well scattered, they offer

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

many good targets to the militant rebels. Being scattered, they have to be constantly moving between their numerous detachments. Carefully planned ambushes, now and again, by well-organised bands will make the soldiers move in strength when they do move. That, combined with their dispersion, will reduce their effectiveness and tend to confine them to towns and main roads, leaving the rest of the country free to the rebels.

Meanwhile, the political group will be continuing its activities in all manner of ways. Its press department will be busy keeping the flame of nationalism alive and making the most of alleged outrages committed by the police or the military. The foreign department will be actively extending contacts abroad, with the object of gaining as much sympathetic publicity as possible for the cause, raising money and causing embarrassment to the enemy government. The parliamentary section will be kept hard at work raising questions and protests. The finance department will be dealing with the task not only of raising funds, but also of disguising accounts so that they are kept secret and free from attack. An accusation department is a useful adjunct. It can embroil the police

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

and the military in copious correspondence about claims for damages to property, thefts when houses are searched, interference with religious liberties, and the like. It can supply with material both the parliamentary section and that most important department, the department of propaganda.

Finally, there is one unwitting ally from which the other side derives much benefit in sub-war, the law. In the first place, Parliament will naturally hesitate to surrender its authority to the extent of giving to an individual, military or civil, full scope to deal with the situation on its merits. Therefore, martial law is unlikely to be enforced, and if it ever is enforced, it will only be enforced very late in the day, after rebel strength has become well established. In the second place, the judges will be as reluctant as Parliament to surrender authority. They have the right to judge between the executive and the people, between the rulers and the ruled. They will insist on the usual procedure, the usual laws of evidence, and the usual proofs, and will regard with grave suspicion any plea on the part of the executive that the situation is so abnormal as to justify drastic curtailment of the usual safeguards to public liberty.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

From the point of view of the other side, sub-war must be rather amusing, because the results are so startling, provided of course that the opposition is managed as in the past, as in Ireland or as in Palestine. Roughly speaking, five hundred adequately armed rebels, supported by a good political group and provided with scouts, spies, message runners, misinformers, and signallers, can stop the police from functioning as police over an area equal to three or four large counties, and can balance anything between five thousand and ten thousand soldiers for about a year.

It will not do to end on a note of glee regarding sub-war, even after viewing it from the point of view of the other side. A brief explanation of the way in which it constructs itself and the lines of its action leaves out all that is underhand and brutal in its nature and makes it appear in the guise of some new game. It is necessary to see it in action in order to know it, but few can do that. Their nearest approach to the reality is when they watch a gangster film.

It is difficult to imagine here, in this country, a political group in a minority judged by numbers, but very strong by organisation, strengthened further by secrecy. If such a

## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

thing could be and come into action on sub-war lines, then anyone who dismissed an employee for frequent absence without leave on what he called 'duty,' might receive a letter advising him to take the fellow back. The first letter might be followed by another more precisely worded. The indignant recipient, having ignored the first, would probably send the second to the police. But before the police had finished tracing the sender of threatening letters they would be hunting for a murderer. The secret organisation has to make examples in order to exercise power.

Something of the same kind would happen again, and yet again, before letters of advice began to receive the respect which they deserved. Soon subscription lists with rather vague titles, like the relief of distressed Britannia, would come into circulation, and again refusal to subscribe would be followed by a letter of advice, and again refusal to be advised would be followed by a funeral.

Soon the public would become excited and angry with the police for failure to provide protection and failure to find the criminals. At last the police would arrest someone, and someone, puffing out a chest in support of law,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

order, and public security, would come forward proudly as a witness. The witness would probably disdain protection and refuse to be locked up safely in a cell close by the prisoner, and so a day or two before the trial the key-witness would be in the hands of the undertaker.

One day Aldershot would wake up to find that numbers of rifles had vanished from the barrack-rooms during the dark early hours of the new day, when soldiers sleep like the dead. There would then be a spate of regulations and orders about the art of safeguarding arms. When that stable door had been locked, gun-shops would begin to receive as much attention from midnight visitors as fur stores sometimes receive in days of perfect peace. A flood of regulations covering the manufacture, storage, retail and wholesale trade and private possession of arms of all kinds would follow. Then the police would have to be armed.

By then it would be possible for someone walking along a street to see a car driven by a woman with two men in it stop to ask a policeman on point-duty the way. While the lady was engaging the policeman one of the men would shoot him through the head, and the other would quickly collect his revolver.



## SUB-WAR—THE OTHER SIDE

The car would be off at full speed, leaving someone wondering whether he should mention the fact that he had noted the number and description of the car and its occupants, or just forget all about it.

Deterioration continues till the public is coerced to boycott those who help the State directly in the maintenance of order. Some services, however, such as posts, telephones, and telegraphs, through which information may leak, would often be more useful in than out of action. The thing develops gradually, and with it there grows a deadening of the public conscience, till murder, arson, and intimidation come to be regarded as part of normal daily life. As a result, those who are not actively against the Government sink into a state of neutrality in which they try to have nothing to do with either side. Soon there is no such thing as public opinion.

It sounds fantastic ; as if such things could never be within the sphere of British rule. It is, however, a fact. Two-thirds of our three-in-one Empire, Commonwealth, Colonial and Indian, are exposed to a new challenge from within. In a way, these parts are in the middle of the next war now.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID.

THE brief description given in the previous chapter of the lines of action followed by the other side in sub-war may have made it clear how a police force can be attacked and deprived of the support and co-operation of the public, on which it must depend for success. It may not be as clear why troops should be so ineffectual when called in by the civil power to support the police.

There are rules in existence governing the employment of troops in aid of the civil power, part of which is the police. These rules, however, were framed to deal with riot and not with sub-war, and date from the time when there were no police. They fit well enough the case of a crowd standing shoulder to shoulder brandishing sticks or pitchforks and threatening violence unless something is done. Crowds have still to be dealt with occasionally, more

## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

particularly in India, during times of religious excitement. Use was made of crowds by sub-war experts in China at Shameen, Canton, and at Hankow in 1927 to provoke incidents.

The rules governing the use of troops in aid of the civil power are based on the common law duty of all loyal subjects to rally to the aid of the magistrates, when called upon to do so, in face of some crisis. The soldiers rally as loyal subjects. The fact that they constitute a disciplined body of men bearing arms is merely incidental, though useful. Those who neglect to rally commit an offence, as do also those on the other side who neglect to disperse peacefully when called upon to do so by a magistrate.

If a crowd refuses to disperse at the call of the magistrate, he then reads the riot act, and if the crowd still refuses to disperse and still constitutes a menace to the peace, he may call on the officer commanding the troops to disperse the crowd by force. That, however, means using the troops as a disciplined body under arms and not as a crowd of loyal subjects, all dressed alike.

The troops invariably will be weaker in

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

numbers than the crowd. Therefore, the officer commanding must not let the crowd press so close that a series of tussles for possession of the soldiers' weapons can begin. Were that allowed to happen, the crowd could by force of numbers annex the weapons belonging to the troops. So, once the magistrate has authorised the officer to act, and if the crowd continues to be a menace, there has to be shooting. But the law insists that the officer may use only enough force to meet the object, the restoration of order. If it turns out that he used more force than was necessary, he will have committed an offence.

These common law, common-sense rules do very well for old-fashioned or primitively organised protests or riots on the part of the ruled. But something more up to date is required to deal with sub-war. In that form of riot or insurrection the performers no longer stand in a crowd, shoulder to shoulder, brandishing sticks or pitchforks. They remain dispersed but just as riotous, and though dispersed, retain all the cohesion of a crowd by virtue of organisation. It is the cohesion of the thing that has to be broken in order to restore order.

## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

While any part of H.M. Forces may be called upon to aid the civil power on land, including the Royal Navy, the burden of that duty falls naturally, in the main, upon the infantry. It is not easy to hunt a lurking rebel out from under a bed with a tank, or with an armoured car. It is proposed therefore to follow the fortunes of an infantry battalion, acting in aid of the civil power, under conditions of sub-war. It is proposed also to assume that the civil power has decided to do what it almost always does decide to do, that is, use the troops in support of the police.

The first thing that is likely to happen to a battalion is that it will be spread over a county, and remain spread till reinforcements eventually arrive. There have been cases of a battalion about five hundred strong finding as many as ten detachments. It may, however, be lucky and have to find only three or four. Now, a battalion, under conditions of international war, for which it normally trains, is a thing which has a width of one mile and a depth of one mile. A whole county is therefore rather a strain. In the first place, each detachment has to protect itself. That means that many more men have to be used up in protective duties

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

than would be the case were the battalion all together in one billet. In the second place, the feeding arrangements cause complication. The tentacles of that great octopus, the Treasury, reach everywhere. Its control has greatly complicated the feeding of troops. Part of the men's food, bread and meat, is supplied to them by contract. The other part, which makes the contract part eatable, butter, tea, sugar, and vegetables, has to be bought by means of an allowance of money, which varies from month to month with the cost of living.

In order to supply the contract part, military vehicles have to go daily from the battalion headquarters to each detachment and back. In order to supply the other part, little shops of the N.A.A.F.I., an organisation with a monopoly for the supply of these things to all three Services, have to be set up at each detachment. These shops may buy locally and charge prices which may not fit the regulation costs. Anyhow, this daily performance entails movement on roads, and that, under conditions of sub-war, means protective escorts.

Then there are such domestic accidents as courts-martial. If a soldier does something

## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

startling at the other end of the county, he has to be brought, with all the witnesses, to headquarters for a summary of evidence. Then, perhaps a week later, a court is assembled for the trial, and in come officers from distant parts, and back come all the witnesses again. That all requires more escorts. So the mere business of living scattered drains the strength of a battalion enormously, and not much is left to provide striking forces to advance the cause, the restoration of order.

Meanwhile, what of the police, whom the troops are supposed to be supporting. It soon becomes noticeable that they continue to protect the stations in which they live, just as before. They continue to move about in patrol formations. In fact, they continue to behave as soldiers and not as police. The only gain appears to be that soldiers are close at hand to rescue the police if anything goes wrong, if, for example, their stations are attacked. The two organisations remain quite distinct in respect of pay, living, and supplies. There is, in fact, a great deal of overlap and waste of energy.

A few examples may help to make clear what actually happens when troops are in support of

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the police. In Ireland the police sometimes asked for military escorts when one or two constables had to go round a country district to serve summonses for non-payment of taxes, a popular form of defiance of government. The first expedition would be rather like calling on the county and leaving cards. The summonses having been delivered a pause would ensue, and then would come another request for more escorts to go all round again and arrest individuals for not obeying the summonses. That as a rule produced no result, for none of the wanted persons was stupid enough to be caught.

So, next time, the military hit on the bright idea of taking one bite at a cherry instead of two. They took a spare lorry when they went calling. Instead of just serving a summons, articles of furniture, grossly undervalued, would be loaded into the lorry, while the good-wife of the house either wept or, more often, abused luridly. It was all just a game really, which, if tactfully handled and spiced with a little humour, always ended in the production of the required cash, though the good-wife had protested all along that her man, absent somewhere, kept all the money. Then the furniture



## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

would all come out of the lorry and on would go the party to the next house of call. Instead of gratitude, however, the inventor of this simple method of attaining results would be loaded with abuse for irregular methods. In the end, the police would be told to go and be silly by themselves as it seemed to make no difference to the result, their way, whether they had escorts or not.

A worse example of successful irregularity arose over illegal cattle grazing. Twice the police asked for military aid to remove cattle which had been driven on to the excellent grazing lands of an absentee landlord. Twice the military had ejected the cattle, though as cattle removers they were not very expert. One drive had certainly removed the cattle from the lands of Sir Michael Muchabsent, but had left half of them in the middle of some standing crops belonging to a perfectly innocent third party.

At the third request for help to remove the same cattle once more, the officer concerned took a line of his own. He sent for the agent, took him to a field where the rebel cattle were placidly grazing, put a Bible in his hand and heard him swear that the field belonged to Sir

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Michael, that the cattle did not, and that the fences were in order. He then shot three beasts dead, killed that item of illicit grazing equally dead, and raised a pandemonium of correspondence. An incident like that, if properly handled by the parliamentary section of the other side, can raise a question in the House. "Is it true that on the 20th of May last twenty valuable cows, the property of John Sweeny, James Cassidy, and William O'Brien, all farmers in a small way at Ballybluff in the County of Hooey, which cattle had strayed into the fields of a certain Sir Michael Muchabsent, through negligence to keep fences in proper repair, were shot, wounded, maimed, and left to die by soldiers under the command of an officer? If true, what disciplinary action has been taken, or is being taken?"

In Palestine the police, backed by the government, demanded large numbers of troops for duty as anti-intimidation patrols. The Arab shops were then all shut as part of the 'strike,' and it was thought that the owners were only prevented from opening their back-doors, at least, to trade, by intimidation. So troops were strewn about the streets to anti-intimidate, whatever that may be. Two Arabs might meet

## SUB-WAR — MILITARY AID

under the noses of a patrol and converse in quite a normal way, but the soldiers would not know whether the Arabic noises meant, "Congratulations on your marriage. I hope her face and figure justify the price you paid," or "Pay fifty piastres to the Red Spear before curfew to-night for opening your shop yesterday, or the Red Spear will be repainted with your blood." These patrols in the heat of the sun, day after day, without any definite result, or indication of a result, wasted time and bored the troops to distraction.

Frequently the Palestine police asked for military help to surround some village and arrest armed men known to be harboured by its inhabitants. Frequently the help was given, but always the villagers knew all about it in plenty of time. Once notices in English were found on the house doors, "Please do not disturb the contents more than is absolutely necessary." Inside every house the gear was all laid out as if for a kit inspection. The reception was immaculate, a perfect example of the thumb, with four fingers extended, applied to the aquiline nose.

The trouble always was that the civil authorities and the police, and last of all the military,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

dealt with the absolutely reliable information received from some secret source. While all this dealing was going on, by telephone, by typewritten correspondence, or by conference, an Arab, employed in a district or police office, would slip away and inform the local scouts or a branch of the youth movement, and the sub-war machinery of warning would at once be set in motion. The only hope was, and still is, that the British recipient of the absolutely reliable information should take it straight to the local military commander, who should then take action without delay or reference to anyone else. The information must be kept in reliable hands. In countries like Palestine or India, where civil officials or police officers may be natives of the country, the only reliable hands under the conditions of sub-war are British. Action must then be prompt and based on a simple plan, or the other side will be warned in time, as always happened in Palestine.

The truth is that the idea of using troops in sub-war to support the police does not lead anywhere. It never gets the police right back to duty as police, because the people are no longer supporting and co-operating with the

## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

police, or because part of the police is in sympathy with the other side, and so unreliable, as, for example, the bulk of the Arab part of the Palestine police. The idea is fundamentally unsound. Police only come into action in normal times when some illegal act is done. They react to action. The initiative lies with the law-breakers. But because the police reaction is usually successful, as long as they have behind them the goodwill and support of the public, and because the law-breakers are not united in a common purpose, there is control over the law-breakers by the police. In war, however, and sub-war is a form of war, reaction to action leads nowhere. It leaves the initiative to the other side and is purely defensive. It may prevail in the end by wearing the other side down, but that will take a long time and is an expensive stupid way of restoring order; in fact, the way of attrition. That method callously disregards the neutral, the normal citizen, the majority, all in amongst whom this bewildering sub-war is waged.

When at last the clash of ideas between dispersal of force to aid the police and concentration of force to make it effective begins to go in favour of concentration, there arises

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

a new difficulty. The policy of the civil power is always to hold every district or every county, in spite of the fact that only centres of population and the main communications between them are really being held. All the rest of the country, the fields, the hills, the woods, and the villages, are really uncontrolled, except when columns of troops invade for brief periods. It is in these uncontrolled areas, most of the country in fact, that the armed rebels lurk. From them they emerge to shoot or ambush, on information supplied by their unarmed friends in the towns.

The new clash of ideas is still between concentration of force and dispersal of force. On the one hand is the idea of giving up for a while what is of less importance and concentrating on a part in order to bring it street by street and parish by parish under really effective control. There were counties in Ireland and sub-districts in Palestine where it mattered little if the rebels were left for a while to play about among themselves as long as they were cut off from the rest of the country.

The policy of holding on obstinately has always been followed in sub-war. It leads to armistice and not to a clear decision in favour

## SUB-WAR—MILITARY AID

of government. The methodical re-establishment of rule step by step would be slow but sure with the advantage of visible progress, and with the initiative in the right hands. But it would require considerable reinforcements, because it would probably have to be combined with holding all centres and communications for political reasons.

## CHAPTER V.

### SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER.

THE authority responsible for co-ordinating all the means available for making war of any kind is the civil power. In international war the civil power normally delegates the fullest powers to a commander-in-chief in the war zone. But in the case of sub-war, a case where strife takes place in among the people of the country which the civil power itself is responsible for ruling, such delegation has disadvantages. However, as long as it retains all power in its own hands, the civil power alone is responsible for success or failure.

The civil power then is responsible for arranging that its police and any part of H.M. Forces, charged with the duty of aiding it, act in harmony towards the attainment of the common object. The civil power is responsible for the plan. Last, but not least, it is responsible for ensuring that it itself moves in harmony with the police



## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

and the military. Three bodies have to move in step together, the civil authorities, the police, and H.M. Forces. Difficult though it is to get real co-operation, without waste and overlap, between the police and the military, and they have features in common, it is still more difficult to weld three authorities together.

The civil power is particularly puzzling. The history of sub-war leaves it uncertain whether the civil power regards itself as a body which really takes part in the struggle to restore complete order, or whether it regards itself as a kind of referee between its own forces which it can control, and those of the other side which it cannot control.

One or two examples may serve to show how puzzling is the attitude of the civil power. The first example is taken from Ireland in 1920, and deals, not with the heads of the three bodies, civil, police, and military, but with the extreme and relatively unimportant finger-tips. It shows what may happen if the three do not work together. It shows how the civil power can leave a whole county in a state of vagueness as to who represents it, if anyone. It shows also the attitude of the civil power when any other body takes action in its absence.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

In this case a state of sub-war existed in the county without any doubt. The police had already lost a few isolated police stations, which had been burnt to ensure that they did not reoccupy them. An infantry battalion was scattered all over the county in support of the police, and the civil power was represented, presumably, by one resident magistrate. This resident magistrate lived for safety with one of the infantry detachments at the far end of the county. All the other magistrates (J.P.'s) but one had resigned, voluntarily or under intimidation. The one who still held out was busy trying to recover his son, aged about seven, who had been kidnapped.

The battalion never knew what the resident magistrate was doing, where he went, or when and where he held his courts. The police likewise went about their own routine affairs in their own time and in their own way without any reference to those who possessed almost all the protective power in existence in that county. Then, suddenly, all in one day, the penalty for this lack of co-ordination in face of well-organised sub-war had to be paid.

The proceedings began with the receipt at battalion headquarters of an anonymous warn-

## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

ing, misspelt and ill-written: "Let the one that goes in the little black box beware, the bad ones are out to murder him." This was taken to refer to the resident magistrate who went about the county in a very old two-seater car, not unlike a box-Ford. The adjutant at once took the note to the local police inspector in the market town a mile from the workhouse which housed battalion headquarters and a company. On the way there he passed a car full of police going in the opposite direction.

The police inspector, lately transferred from Ulster and strange to the county, had had a similar warning. The adjutant then learnt from him for the first time that the resident magistrate was due there that very day at about eleven o'clock to hold a court. He also learnt that the police car, which he had passed, was on its way to take pay to another police detachment stationed in another market town about ten miles away on the road by which the resident magistrate was most likely to come. In addition, he was told that the police always took the pay on that particular day of the week and set out at that time in order to be back in time for their mid-day meal.

The adjutant's hair was beginning to rise

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

by this time, so in all haste he sped back to the workhouse, and there it rose still higher. A corporal was standing in the yard holding a horse and explaining to the commanding officer that he had just received an urgent warning from a young woman while down at the smithy getting the horse shod. The girl had seemed very agitated when she told him that she had seen a car pass up the road and thought it was Ted Scott that was driving it. She begged him to go back at once and get the soldiers out. "The boys are all out and there's an ambush on now between here and Dunbog, and Ted'll get killed," she had said. The corporal explained that Ted and the lady in question were on very good terms.

The adjutant was for a moment puzzled when he noticed that the said Ted, a R.A.S.C. driver, was seated in the military Crossley, into which soldiers were hurriedly climbing. Then he remembered that the driver of the police car, for some reason, also wore khaki. He also made a mental note of the fact that Dunbog was the place to which the police had gone with the pay.

By this time all was ready, and two cars swung out of the gate and sped away westward, a

## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

box-Ford with an officer, a Lewis-gun, and two men, followed by a Crossley tender containing an officer with six riflemen—a total of two officers and eight soldiers, not counting the two drivers. This feeble force was followed by a party of forty men on foot under a third officer.

The business of finding an ambush without first being found by it is tricky. However, about half-way to Dunbog shots were heard ahead, and both cars accelerated to full speed. Rounding a bend they almost dashed into the police car halted in the middle of the narrow road. Its driver was hanging out, trailing in the dust, with a foot caught in the clutch pedal. A policeman sat in the back part of the car leaning his elbow on the side-rail and resting his chin in his hand. He too was dead, though he did not look it at first sight. Another dead policeman lay in the bottom of the tender, and the rest were strewn about the road beyond the car, some badly wounded. The rebels had almost been caught stripping their victims of their arms and ammunition, and were off in all directions.

The soldiers reached the crest of the ridge to the south of the road in no time, leaving one man behind to tend the wounded police, and

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Scott was ordered to turn his car and go back for a load of the forty men on foot. Shots by now were coming from all directions, but there was little or nothing for the soldiers to shoot back at. Even the man on the road below giving water to the wounded police was being sniped. Then the Lewis-gun fired a burst or two at a group of three armed men in plain clothes dodging across a field, while the riflemen fired hard into likely patches of cover. Suddenly, in less than five minutes, it was all over, the enemy had gone.

A rifle and some carbines were found, together with a good deal of ammunition, in the subsequent search. Many pairs of boots were also picked up, the other side apparently making better time across country without them. The ambush trench was examined, and found littered with haversacks, half-eaten rations, bottles, and greatcoats, the enemy obviously having lain there all night. But nowhere was there any sign of Scott, and his car remained still in the middle of the road, nose to nose against the riddled police car.

Meanwhile, back at the workhouse messages had gone out along the railway telegraph, into which the military telephones tapped, to stop

## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

the resident magistrate and the police with the pay at Dunbog. Replies came that the police had already delivered the pay and gone, and that the magistrate had not passed through. As he had not arrived to hold his court by mid-day, patrols were sent out along all likely roads from the other end. One of these patrols found his car by a level crossing fifteen miles short of Dunbog, with blood all over the driver's seat, but no sign of the magistrate. Just as this news was received an officer returned from the scene of the ambush to say that Scott had been found well wounded in among some whins and brambles. He had gone rushing off to join in the battle, and run full into a frightened rebel who shot him and fled, just as he fired his revolver. So he, the man for whose sake the only lucid warning had been given by any of the inhabitants, was the only military casualty.

That evening the question of punishment was considered. There was no hope for any of the wounded police, and the resident magistrate was probably dead already. Nine good men were dead or dying. The punishment was prompt and severe. Dwellings close by the scene of the ambush, the inhabitants of which had fled, instead of bringing warning, had been

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

burnt already by order of the officer on the spot. Rebel halls and meeting-places in the neighbouring market towns were burnt that night. A search was made for seven out of twenty-one rebel leaders on the intelligence list, and their houses, from which they had fled, were burnt. One, however, was caught and shot.

Next day an order was issued and posted, giving the inhabitants forty-eight hours in which to produce the body of the magistrate, dead or alive, failing which there would be punishment twice as heavy. They produced the body dead within the time limit.

There remained much to do, to hunt the country for wounded rebels, follow up clues, search houses, trace absent men, and scour the country for arms and keep on and on at it. But instead the civil power intervened, and day after day was wasted on inquiries and reports. All energy was diverted from the proper course, and in the end the civil power neither approved nor disapproved. However, positive action did help the neutrals to rally to the stronger side, and there was peace for many weeks. Bands trying to arrange ambushes were chased away by farmers, afraid that they might lose all they had if any ambush took



## SUB-WAR--THE CIVIL POWER

place near their homes. Things went reasonably well till the civil power intervened again and published a decree allowing inhabitants to claim for injuries inflicted on them by the police or military maliciously, that is, illegally by the standards of normal times. That decree could well have waited till the war was won, the Government paid in any case. Issued then, it was stupid and did much harm. Ambushes became fashionable again, because nobody who could get a nice new farm for a rotten old one took any further interest in his common law duty to give warning of intended murder.

Events in Palestine in 1936 made the attitude of the civil power still more difficult to understand. The Government of that country seemed to be always trying to prevent the police and H.M. Forces from ever doing more than just defend themselves. It seemed to have no desire to stop sub-war and re-establish British authority in the country. Even after the armistice of October 1936 its attitude remained obscure. Judging from the way in which it changed its mind, it seemed to be uncertain about its purpose.

One example arose out of the shooting of a loyal Arab police inspector who was on the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

gunmen's list because he had been so loyal. He arrived one morning by car at his police office and was about to step out, when one or more gunmen opened fire, wounding him and his driver. A crowd immediately surged round to cover the escape of the murderers. The town in which this outrage was committed was a small Arab town not difficult to control or search, so at once a twenty-two hour curfew was imposed, with military help to make it effective, as it was believed that the gunmen were still hiding in the place.

After being in force for a very short time, the curfew was taken off. A curfew is a restriction, imposed in the main on innocent persons. But, against that, must be set the fact of the existence of gunmen with their revenge lists and assassinations and the urgent need to eliminate them before they succeed in establishing terrorism.

However, the attitude of the British Cabinet with regard to Palestine was equally difficult to understand. In September, after sub-war had flourished for five months in the Holy Land, it announced that it reaffirmed its previous decision and was resolved to re-establish British authority in Palestine and resort to stern

## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

measures. It would be interesting to know when, if ever, it had made the decision described as previous. In any case, it never resorted to stern measures.

The British Government's real object was to get a Royal Commission out to Palestine. The obstacle in the way was its own statement that no Commission would be sent till order had been restored. It seems that it never was the intention of the British Government to restore order in Palestine. Instead, that was to be done by the Arab leaders who had started and were still controlling the disorders, but the obstacle in their way was their statement that they would not stop the 'strike' till all their demands had been met. So the Arab kings were brought into action to advise the Arab leaders to stop the 'strike.' The stoppage of the 'strike' then released the starting gate on the Royal Commission. In fact, the Arab kings saved the faces of the Arab leaders, and they in turn saved the faces of the British Cabinet. Thus an armistice was arranged, the Arab rebels retaining and maintaining still their organisation, arms, funds, boycott, and intimidation.

It seems that the civil power in sub-war

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

never has the same object in view as its police and military forces. The armed forces aim at the restoration of order. The civil power aims at a compromise, beginning with an armistice. In 1920 a very important British Cabinet minister in a speech likened the troubles in Ireland to a legal contest between two obstinate bone-headed litigants. They hammer away and hammer away, progressing from court to court, neither budging an inch, till, at last, the mounting costs cause first hesitation and then loss of nerve. Then the only sensible parties in the dispute, the lawyers, gain at last a hearing, and the case is settled by agreement, as it might have been settled from the very beginning with a little common-sense give and take.

If that comparison reveals the mind of the British Cabinet with regard to the sub-war which was troubling them in 1920, the course of events in Palestine in 1936 reveals just the same attitude of mind towards sub-war fifteen years later. The civil power, therefore, is not at one with its police and armed forces. It just regards them as one dog in a dog-fight, no better, and perhaps no worse, than the other dog, just a dog.

The question arises whether this attitude of

## SUB-WAR—THE CIVIL POWER

the civil power is wise. Life, it has been suggested, is a perpetual effort to balance conflicting forces, perpetual because of constant change and movement. Those who believe that the civil power is right in doing what it does in sub-war may well point out that just what the civil power in fact does, is to balance conflicting forces, and to do so it must stand back and adopt the attitude of a referee. Those who support that policy must then admit that the civil power is following a policy of conciliation and not one of sanctions in face of rebellious resort to force within its own sphere of rule.

The question still arises whether that policy is wise. It seems to ignore the principles of peace. The long-drawn-out sub-war struggle in South Ireland did not end with the compromise which the British Cabinet managed to arrange during the armistice. That compromise left a self-appointed group in control of South Ireland, a group which had successfully appealed to force. It left the country full of uncontrolled arms and gangs and gunmen, liable to follow the example of their leaders and act by force as self-appointed agents in their own causes. In actual fact, they regrouped themselves, and intense fighting began again. In Palestine also

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

a compromise has lately been arranged, but it remains to be seen whether that will mean the end of the fighting.

There remains the question of the armed forces. Theirs not to reason why. Theirs not to think of expressing views regarding the policy of the civil power. But it is doubtful wisdom just to use them as a dog in a dog-fight, because that makes no distinction between just force and unjust force. It relegates the armed forces to the position of hired men, mercenaries, who bother not at all about the merits of the cause for which they fight. It removes that vital element of the spirit so particularly vital in war of any kind, an element which can almost turn a pound weight into a ton, moving with the velocity of light. It suggests that the civil power is not sure that its cause is a just cause; that it uses the armed forces, not to serve the right, but to save it and cover its retreat. The policy of the civil power seems cynical rather than wise.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SUB-WAR—THE LAW.

THE facts of history, as far as sub-war is concerned, indicate that the civil power behaves as a conciliatory referee between the armed forces of the Crown on the one hand, and armed or unarmed rebels on the other. There is, however, another referee in the field—the law. The civil referee has a tendency to rush about the field penalising in the main what are sometimes termed the forces of law and order. The legal referee, on the other hand, is a stationary body, which only gives a decision when someone, usually a member of the other side, appeals to it. These two referees are generally at loggerheads, a fact which adds to the confusion on our side. Reference has already been made in Chapter I. to 'The Times' leading article "The Palestine Inquiry," which contains the words, "the notorious conflict between the Executive and a section of the Judicature."

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Examples can be given of a similar state of affairs in Ireland fifteen years earlier.

Officially, of course, sub-war is a form of peace ; for example, armed rebels do not have to comply with the laws and usages of war on land by carrying their arms openly, wearing distinctive uniforms to prevent confusion with the non-combatant inhabitants, or by treating prisoners in the recognised manner. Militarily sub-war is a mixture. Soldiers are only on active service for death, wounds, and discipline. That means that if a man is killed his dependants may receive a pension ; if a soldier is wounded and badly disabled he receives free treatment, and may also get a pension ; if a soldier commits a military offence when engaged in sub-war he can be punished as severely as in international war, that is, more severely than in peace. But as the soldier is not on active service for wear and tear of clothing and gear he pays the difference between the strain of sub-war and the normal wear of peace. Legally sub-war is non-existent. The law remains the law.

Sometimes the civil power which makes the laws changes them to meet the special demands of sub-war, as it did in Palestine when it made Emergency Regulations under the authority of



## SUB-WAR—THE LAW

an Order in Council. Sometimes it even suspends most of the law, as it did in parts of Ireland when it declared martial law. It is when it does either of these things that the judges, the lords of the law, are liable to fall out with the civil power.

In Ireland judges came into districts in which martial law was in force, presumably to deal only with cases which had no connection with sub-war, such as disputes regarding property or inheritance, or crimes in the ordinary course of life, such as burglary or theft. But quite often on arrival, after settling on the bench and adjusting robes, a judge would announce that because he was there and functioning there was no justification whatever for the suspension of the normal law by the thing called martial law, which is no law at all.

A statement of that kind delivered from the bench amounted to a claim on the part of the judge to decide whether the civil power was justified in altering the normal laws in such a way as to give itself power to compete with sub-war. Whatever the merits of the claim as a claim might be, the practical effect was, both in Ireland and in Palestine, a battle between the two referees, with marked ill-effect

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

on the ability of anyone on our side to compete successfully with sub-war.

From the military point of view, the claim was a claim which took the military breath away. Probably half the available striking force of a battalion had to be removed from pursuit of the war to provide guards of honour, guards on the judge's residence, and patrols in the streets and about the court house, in order to make quite sure that the judge reached his bench, and having reached it, stayed there safely to judge.

Unquestionably, martial law or any less drastic change in the normal law should not be imposed unless a state of affairs exists so grave as to justify it. Assuming a grave state of affairs to exist, and even assuming that troops are available in numbers enough to ensure the safe sitting of any number of judges in the middle of it, no progress can be made without witnesses. Even with witnesses, difficulties remain. They may swear in scores that a man accused by the police or military was seen and spoken to by them at a place miles away from the scene of the alleged offence, at the very time it was said to have been committed. The presence of a judge is neither proof that a situation is normal, nor a cure for sub-war.

In Ireland a man condemned to death by a military court could be taken out of the hands of the military authorities by the order of a judge. Here is a case. One day in 1921 a car patrol escorting a commanding officer on inspection was returning to quarters. The patrol was moving in formation with about a quarter of a mile between cars along a winding country road in brilliant weather. An officer, sitting beside the driver in the leading car, noticed a cyclist some distance ahead, and noticed that when they rounded the next bend they had gained on him a little. He thought nothing of it, and his interest was not aroused till he saw the cyclist look over his shoulder and then bend over his handlebars and pedal for all he was worth. Round the next bend lay a stretch of straight road with the cyclist in full view. As the car gained on him he looked over his shoulder again, wobbled, and then threw something over the hedge on his right, and soon after something else went flying over a dry stone dyke on his left. A minute later the cyclist was overtaken and held, while soldiers went running back to find what he had thrown away. They returned with two small parcels and handed them to the officer. One contained a revolver and the other

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

twelve rounds of ammunition to fit it. The panting cyclist looked round a ring of faces, all staring at him, but no one spoke. Then he was bundled into the car and taken away.

About three weeks later the cyclist, a nice-looking youth of about nineteen years of age, was in jail awaiting execution, having been condemned to death by a military court. His counsel was in Dublin playing his last card, an appeal for a writ of habeas corpus. This, he pleaded, is the case of a young man, almost a boy, who set out one day on his bicycle to visit friends in a market town about fifteen miles distant from his home. A friend, another young man, having heard that he was going, asked him to take two small parcels to deliver to a third young man, known to both of them. The lad consented. Then, while cycling along in the depth of the country about half-way to his destination, he heard the sound of a car behind him, and looking over his shoulder saw that it was a military tender. Then very foolishly he lost his nerve and tried to get away. Innocent though he was of any thought of doing wrong he had neglected to ask what were the contents of the two parcels, and doubt began to prey on his mind. When he saw that

he could not escape he made matters worse by throwing both packages away in full view of the approaching car. First, doubt, and then a terror of being searched, drove him blindly to incriminate himself. That is his crime and his only crime, a foolish yielding to fear, excusable in one so young. There is no proof that he knew what he was carrying. He never knew nor even suspected that his friends had any connection with the secret societies which by force and the use of arms have been terrorising the country for years. All his short life he has behaved honourably, free from any stain whatever on his character, always well spoken of. And what good can it do to add one more death to a list too long already.

The writ was granted and the youth was released, a free man. There are doubtless many people who would ask that same question, what good can it do to add one more death to the list, and be ready with the answer. Doubtless the youth's counsel was sincere. But probably neither he nor those who would ask the question had ever seen another youth, aged about nineteen, sitting dead in the back of a police tender, resting his elbow on the rail, with his chin cupped in his hand; nor ever

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

seen the driver of a police car hit, to fall trailing out of it all twisted, with a foot caught in the clutch pedal ; nor ever heard a soldier, after doing what he could for badly wounded policemen strewn about a road, report to his officer, "When I gave them water each one was moaning, ' what have I done, what have I done. ' "

The cold truth was that when the youthful cyclist was caught sub-war had been raging for the best part of two years, and every inhabitant of the country knew quite well the penalty for being found in possession of arms. The youth himself knew it well enough when he looked into the eyes of the soldiers standing round him, just after the parcels had been opened. Had these soldiers been asked for their verdict and sentence then, the answers would have been unanimous, and the lad would have died. If they had been asked, months later, whether they wanted the fellow to be hanged, they would probably have said they were no longer interested, provided that he was kept safe till the war ended.

There is a psychological period in such matters. If that period is missed, truth becomes overgrown and hidden by weeds, like false sentiment, special pleading and propaganda,

and a man executed becomes a martyr and one let off, a hero. Trial should be completed and sentence enforced within the psychological period. That requires good organisation and men to work it, free from fads. In general, to add one more death to the list through a swift process of trial, sentence, and execution means not having to add half a dozen more, instead of one. In Ireland the organisation was bad enough, in Palestine fifteen years later it was worse.

In Palestine, in 1936, everything connected with the law seemed to suffer from something akin to arthritis, mental and physical. Why the battle between the civil referee and the legal referee originated, goodness knows. However, it not only originated but developed into a war. The Emergency Regulations for some reason annoyed the legal referee, and, as a result, many of the acts done by the civil power or its agents under them were ruled to be *ultra vires* in a way which made them appear to be wanton abuse of power rather than illegal use of power. The machine just did not work; its component parts failed to fit. Not only did the law's delays become a byword, but the law's ways aroused ridicule.

Some Arabs once threw a bomb into a military

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

billet and were caught. It took between three and four months to get the case heard by a magistrate. By that time, all the military witnesses had left Palestine for service elsewhere, so these dangerous rebels were let loose. It took months to bring rebels to trial for the murder of police or soldiers. The courts did not appear to be organised at all for the administration of speedy justice.

The law's peculiar ways gave rise to a story, not a true story, but one which aptly illustrates the peculiarities. An Arab, taking part in an engagement with troops, was captured and brought up on a charge of firing on H.M. Forces. The principal witness was a corporal, who, after giving his evidence, was asked from the bench, "Did the prisoner fire at H.M. Forces?" At once the indignant answer rolled out in broad Scots, "No, sir, he was firing at the Cameron Highlanders." The Arab left the court a free man.

The difficulties in the way of obtaining a conviction were serious. An Arab taken in a fight was found to be suffering from a wound on the right side of his face. Close by him was found a rifle with blood on the stock. But he was not found guilty of the charge of shooting



at H.M. Forces, because nobody could swear that he saw that particular Arab shooting at him. It is, of course, a little difficult in battle with modern weapons, which have considerable range, to collect impressions of the personal appearance of opponents, the precise nature of the weapons they use, the direction of their aim and the instances of firing, with enough accuracy to satisfy a court of law, if circumstantial evidence is not taken into account.

A police sergeant sitting in the front seat of a car was fired at by an Arab standing so close that he could be identified, without any doubt, by his intended victim. The sergeant thought the fellow was shooting at him and was, quite naturally, taking considerable interest. When the shot was fired the driver and not the sergeant was hit and killed. This all took place in a matter of seconds. The murderer fled, pursued by the police. After a hunt round a number of Arabs were collected, and the sergeant noticed among them the wanted man. Just then more police arrived, having with them a police dog. The dog was taken to the place from which the shot had been fired and took up the trail. It followed round in a half-circle and arrived eventually at the group of Arabs collected by

the police. The dog went straight up to one, laid his forepaws on the man's shoulder and barked. The dog picked out the man whom the sergeant knew to be the murderer. At the trial, however, the evidence of what the dog had done was not accepted. That reduced evidence of identification to that of one man, unsupported by anything else, except a corpse. The evidence of one witness was not considered to be enough, and the Arab departed free.

The difficulties were present also in the preparation of cases for trial and in the conduct of cases in court by prosecutors. There were, in fact, three difficult fences to surmount: first, the preparation and the framing of the charge, which was liable to be on the light side; then the handling of the case by the prosecutor in court, which was liable to be on the light side also; and finally, the verdict and sentence, if any.

The case of a relation of the Mufti illustrates the first difficulty. This individual had once been a Government servant, but he became bitten by Arab nationalism and went off to join the armed bands in the hills. One of these bands was known to be somewhere near Bethlehem, so aircraft went up to look for it. One machine

located it and was hit in the process, just a hole in the fabric. Next day the search was carried on by infantry. From the main force a detachment of a platoon was sent to move along the crest of a ridge and act as flank-guard.

The flank-guard platoon, through some slight error in navigation, found itself moving along a valley instead of on the crest of a ridge. In this valley was the armed band, and it saw the platoon coming. The Arab leader at once saw his advantage and quickly posted his men in concealed ambush positions. His orders were that when he gave the signal by opening fire himself, his men, from where they lay on either side of the platoon's line of advance, were to shoot hard and heartily into it.

All went according to plan at first. The platoon moved slowly into the jaws of the ambush. The Arab leader fired his signal, and the jaws promptly beat it for home. The platoon then started shooting at the leader and the small party remaining with him. Almost the first shot killed the leader, whereupon the others thought it wise to go. However, the relative of the Mufti was caught. He had managed to get rid of his weapon, but still had several rounds of ammunition on his person. The relative

proved to be a very voluble prisoner. He held forth on the glories of fighting for one's country, which he had been doing for his, just as his captors were doing for theirs. That, he appeared to assume, created a bond between them. He thought the use of aircraft was a little unfair, and explained how he and his friends had lain on their backs and shot at one, only the day before the unfortunate death of his beloved leader.

The offence seemed to require a deterrent penalty. However, the prisoner was not charged with firing on the troops, nor with aiding those who had fired on them, but with being in possession of ammunition. The charge was not a particularly serious one in Palestine. In due course the prisoner, by now in the hands of the police, was brought before a magistrate, who released him on bail, and that was the last the law saw of him.

Sub-war creates a situation which cannot be met by the laws and punishments of ordinary times. There can be no dispute about that fact. Always the civil authorities have to obtain additional powers. The powers which the Government of Palestine obtained came from the King in Council, in the form of Orders

in Council. The Emergency Regulations which the Government of Palestine issued were designed to meet the abnormal situation which rebellion had brought into existence. In September 1936 the Cabinet decided that the situation in Palestine was so bad that more troops were needed in the country, and that martial law should be declared at the appropriate moment. To give effect to these decisions and the necessary authority to the Government of Palestine another Order in Council was issued. This Order gave to the High Commissioner in Palestine authority to delegate to the G.O.C. power to make such regulations as necessary to secure public safety and re-establish order. That power was, however, never delegated.

Early in 1937 the Courts in Palestine ruled that the September Order in Council had cancelled former Orders in Council, on the authority of which Palestine Emergency Regulations had been issued. Therefore they held that these Emergency Regulations were no longer law. As a result, about a score of rebels awaiting trial were released.

Then, in March 1937, yet another Order in Council was issued, this time giving to the High Commissioner power to make regulations

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

necessary to secure public safety and set up military courts to try cases arising out of them. By the March Order in Council the Emergency Regulations were reinstated. These facts reveal a considerable amount of confusion in the arrangements, the confusion having a tendency to reduce rather than reinforce power to deal with an abnormal situation.

Finally, in March 1937, after the March Order in Council had been issued, the High Commissioner commuted some half-dozen death sentences to imprisonment for life, which in Palestine means something considerably less than a life sentence. The result is that not one Arab rebel captured in arms has suffered death, though some have killed police or soldiers, been tried for the crime, and sentenced to death. A year has not yet elapsed since they killed their victims, but those who killed still live.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW.

REAL martial law is not law. It is rule by the order of someone with enough force behind him to ensure that his orders will be obeyed. It does not require the issue of a long complicated list of regulations of the nature of D.O.R.A. for the benefit of those who have to obey. It does not even have to be consistent in its action as far as they are concerned. All that is required to start it is a simple decree by the martial law ruler.

The shorter the decree the more likely it is to be read and understood by the people. It will inform them that certain persons in the country have banded themselves together to gain by force of arms, or otherwise by force, what they want, or think that the Government should give them. It will inform them also that all persons acting in the manner described, by force of arms, and all persons who assist them

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

in any way whatever, are rebels, and that the penalty for rebellion is death and the forfeiture of all property to the State. The decree may give those who are uneasy about their past two or three days' notice to surrender themselves to the officers of the martial law ruler, and submit to whatever orders they may issue regarding their future.

Any other regulations which the martial law ruler might issue would be regulations for the control of his subordinates to ensure a degree of uniformity in action and guide them in the task of bringing the inhabitants to absolute order. There is no need to disclose any of these regulations to the other side, members of which can be left to learn what they are by experience.

Real martial law is the rule of a conqueror, like William the First. To hark away back to that kind of rule means putting into reverse, with a jerk, the text, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness," which is to be found on a well-known brand of golden syrup tin, or in Judges xiv. 14. It means switching from the sweet, the honey and the bees, back to the strong, no longer dead but very much alive. It means doing the switch in far less time than it took to progress from the strong to the



## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

sweet, from William the First and his orders, through custom in the enforcement of orders, to law, and thence to modern law.

Real martial law can be enforced, without a doubt, and something not unlike it has been enforced within recent years in some European countries. The question is whether real martial law is a feasible proposition within the British Empire. The crux of the matter is that the real martial law ruler must be in an unchallengeable position.

If attention be confined to the Colonial Empire alone, for the sake of simplicity, British policy within that field is directed to educating subject peoples to self-government. That is a noble policy, and therefore Britain should be in an unchallengeable position to bring it to fruition in her own way. But the Cabinet is challengeable in Parliament, the Colonial Secretary is challengeable in the Cabinet, Governors are challengeable by the Colonial Secretary, and a senior officer of one of the Services, acting as local martial law ruler, would be challengeable all up the line. The system seems to make it almost impossible for unchallengeable authority to be delegated to a martial law ruler applying real martial law. In a Mandated Territory even

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Britain is challengeable by the League of Nations.

There are signs that real martial law is not regarded as a feasible proposition by H.M. Government. In September 1936 the Cabinet published its decision to enforce martial law in Palestine at the appropriate moment. Before the general who was to enforce it reached Palestine from London, second thoughts had reduced martial law to something else—a form of statutory martial law requiring detailed regulations like D.O.R.A. The Courts in Palestine were not to be allowed to challenge that weaker thing, but a wide field for challenging action under any regulations which might be made still remained open.

Then, in March 1937, third thoughts introduced yet one more variation. This variation is in some respects a cross between emergency rule by the civil power and military rule by a commander exercising statutory martial law powers. It enables the civil power to make whatever regulations may be necessary to deal with the situation, and set up military courts to dispose of those who offend against them. It also enables all or some of the powers delegated to the head of the civil administra-

tion to be passed on by him to a military commander.

Thus the whole procession of possible ways of dealing with sub-war resembles a rainbow, the shades of colour merging so gently that it is hard to say where one ends and the next begins. There is political pressure by the civil power, emergency rule by the civil power, semi-military rule by the civil power, statutory martial law by the military power, and last of all, real martial law.

In the maintenance of public security in face of rebellion there will always be a natural temptation to try less stern measures first. A governor within the British Empire or in a British Mandate has to live among, and continue to rule, those whose resort to force he may have to stop. He will naturally try to stop it in a way which will not leave memories detrimental to that good understanding between ruler and ruled, which is a principle of good government. But there is danger in failure to develop full power of resistance from the very beginning to a thing as dangerous as sub-war. Apart from the danger of delay in having so many ways of resisting attack, there is one disadvantage in moving step by step to the

development of full power, which deserves attention.

A military commander, to whom power may be delegated in emergency, naturally has a plan for using the forces available. In his plan he will make the fullest use of his units, and will stretch them to the limit of their power in order to avoid having to ask for reinforcements. Then comes the attack, probably sub-war disguised as a strike, a disorder, or a rebellion. The police take the strain first. Their chief naturally hesitates to admit that the task is beyond him. He sees soldiers in considerable numbers apparently doing nothing, and presses for military aid. At first, he asks for just a few selected men. Then a platoon or two would make all the difference. Soon platoons become companies, and companies become battalions.

The head of the administration will also be reluctant to admit failure by handing over to a military commander, and so will be inclined to order the military to help the police. This has all happened before, and there are still many people, and some soldiers, who regard it as right to use every means before falling back on martial law. Martial law is still regarded as the last resort, a desperate remedy.

## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

Meanwhile, the commander with a plan will be becoming more and more disturbed about the health of the plan. In giving aid to the police he probably began by depleting his reserve in the hope that he would get it back again. Then more of his plan gets nibbled away. As time passes, troops destined for one task become diverted to another, and perhaps so committed that they cannot be recovered. The plan, in fact, becomes unworkable. The need to ask for reinforcements becomes pressing, and all the time there is the possibility hanging over the head of the commander, that he may suddenly have full powers handed over to him.

It appears from the recommendation of the Royal Commission regarding public security and its acceptance by H.M. Government, that we have now learnt from experience, at least as far as Palestine is concerned. But it is very necessary to point out that the position in Palestine is most unusual. There has been a rebellion, lasting six months, followed by an armistice lasting from the middle of October 1936. In this period of armistice a Royal Commission has reported, and its recommendations are still under consideration. Meanwhile, the opponents in the late rebellion are all back

in their places again, lined up, waiting for a fresh start. That is something very different from a switch from civil control to military control, in the middle of a sub-war, without a pause in which to get straight.

The Royal Commission gives full weight to the reasons for regarding martial law as the last resort, but nevertheless recommends its introduction, "when once it is recognised that the Civil Police and Magistracy cannot maintain order." In paragraph 57 of Chapter VII. of their Report, the Royal Commission has said:—

"Our chief recommendation is this. Should disorders break out again of such a nature as to require the intervention of the military, there should be no hesitation in enforcing martial law throughout the country under undivided military control. We are under no illusion as to what this means. Innocent people may be sacrificed whilst the guilty escape. Those miscreants who ambushed convoys or laid road-mines frequently came from villages some distance away from the scene of occurrence. The imposition of martial law would undoubtedly increase the resentment against the Mandatory Power and, it is to be feared, leave a legacy of hatred in its wake.

## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

We have above referred to the unpleasant feature of terrorism. From the earliest days of Mandatory rule the difficulty of obtaining the evidence necessary to deal with terrorists without recourse to 'drastic' methods was apparent. With the introduction of martial law extravagant denunciation of 'military frightfulness' will be widespread. A Press which does not hesitate to state that British aeroplanes dropped poisoned sweetmeats would doubtless invent reports of the deliberate desecration of Holy Places. It is no wonder, therefore, that Your Majesty's Government and the High Commissioner prefer to press conciliation to its utmost limit before adopting methods of repression. We are, however, definitely of the opinion that if these conciliatory efforts fail to achieve their object, martial law must be introduced. When once it is recognised that the Civil Police and Magistracy cannot maintain order the military should, in our opinion, be called in, not to act as an additional police force, but under martial law, with all that it implies."

It will be noted that the Royal Commission provides a trigger for starting martial law, but H.M. Government, in the statement of policy

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

regarding Palestine, provide a still better trigger by saying : " If serious disorders should again break out, of such a nature as to require military intervention, the High Commissioner will delegate powers in respect of the whole country, under the Palestine (Defence) Orders-in-Council, to the General Officer Commanding the military forces." A trigger is a necessary safeguard against temptation to put off the evil day and so waste time in developing full force.

Progress has been made in other directions in plans to maintain public security in Palestine. The Orders-in-Council prevent any regulations made by a military commander from being challenged in the Courts, as they were in Ireland in 1920 and as those made by the High Commissioner in Palestine in 1936 were challenged. It has been decided, if necessary, to impose martial law on the whole country and not to parts, as was done in Ireland and was proposed recently in Palestine. The troops, thanks to the trigger, will not be used as police.

It is not real martial law, however, which may be applied, but statutory martial law. There is a difference. Under conditions of real martial law the commander does what he pleases to stop the other side from doing what he deems



## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

to be objectionable. He can arrest leaders and charge them with incitement to rebellion, though the incitement took place before the rebellion and the introduction of martial law.

Under the conditions of statutory martial law the commander may make regulations, but unless those who caused the rebellion by their incitement should contravene one or more of these regulations, after they were issued, he could do nothing to them. They would be able to sit tight and safe, watching the consequences of their incitement. If the bright spirits on the other side invented some form of nuisance which he had not thought of, when he made his regulations, he could do nothing to them till he made a new regulation to cover the point, and even then he would have to wait till they contravened it. However, under conditions of statutory martial law the commander is probably less challengeable than he would be under conditions of real martial law. Real martial law seems to have become a thing almost of the past, ruled out for sub-war and reserved, presumably, for some upheaval like the Indian Mutiny.

No doubt a commander using statutory martial law powers would frame a regulation to safeguard himself and his subordinates from the extrava-

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

gant denunciations of military frightfulness, so definitely expected by the Royal Commission. The regulation would have to be drastic to be effective, imposing a fine and imprisonment for just making an accusation. The making of accusations against troops is part of the programme of the other side. It might appear to some people, who do not know the game, a dreadful thing to make it an offence to make an accusation. The offence ought to be making a false accusation. But sifting accusations to see whether they are good or bad takes time and keeps people in offices, where they can do no harm to the other side.

The accusation racket was just as rife last year in Palestine as it was in Ireland. In one case, about twenty complaints by Arab smallholders arrived in a batch stating that British troops had wantonly damaged vineyards by marching up and down them and stamping on the grapes. Arab grapes do not grow like grapes on the Rhine. The Arab is not very good at propping anything up, so he leaves his grapes to do their best to imitate strawberries, and it is possible to walk on them. But the British soldier has his peculiarities too. He might go into a vineyard to eat grapes, ripe or

## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

unripe, but he would never bother to march about on them. Further, the complaints were all worded alike, and all arrived together. In Ireland, after searches of crofts in the woolliest west, complaints of the loss of gold watches were equally unconvincing.

Though extravagant denunciation could be stopped within a country under martial law, it could not be stopped beyond its boundaries. There, propaganda, misrepresentation, and accusation of frightfulness could and probably would flourish. It is all the more necessary, therefore, to think in terms of the quick knock-out in dealing with sub-war, if only to stop the distraction and confusion which results when it is allowed to drag on and on.

To gain a quick decision in sub-war it seems necessary to achieve what produces a quick decision in other forms of war. The decisive battle like Waterloo or Culloden goes through motions by a process of successful defence followed by attack, or by a process of direct attack, which are means to an end, the breaking of cohesion, and so the destruction of power to control by leaders on the other side. But in these forms of war the followers are drawn up in formations which protect the leaders. These

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

formations have to be broken in order to get at the leaders. But in the case of sub-war, the leaders have foreseen that line of approach and have devised a means of control which still works, in spite of the fact that leaders and followers are almost as scattered as if they had just lost a decisive battle.

For some reason the two referees, the civil power and the law, for once united, always object to any direct attack against leaders in sub-war. They say it would be useless to arrest leaders because their places would, at once, be taken by substitutes already nominated. They say it would seldom be possible to prove that a leader, when arrested, had broken a law. The first difficulty seems trivial. Even a board of directors of an industrial company might find control more difficult to exercise if it had constantly to be appointing new members and finding a new secretary.

The second difficulty, the difficulty of proving anything against a leader when arrested, seems to indicate some flaw in the law. It ought to be possible to hold a person responsible for the consequences of his own acts. Incitement to rebellion ought to be a serious crime, more easy to bring home if rebellion actually results.

## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

Membership of a so-called political organisation which has the same object in view as a militant organisation, active at the same time, should also be a serious crime. In fact, any activity which assists the object for which a militant organisation is working amounts to assisting rebels. The law stands in the way and seems to protect the leaders. It will not allow them to be tried under any emergency regulation for acts done before the regulation came into force, even though the logical consequence of the acts continues after.

One argument which is invariably used against a policy of direct attack on leaders is that it would drive them underground. Apart from the question whether that matters very much, the argument has a weakness. We make it easy for leaders to go underground of their own accord, because we have never yet made a resolute attempt to control the movement of the civil population in a sub-war.

When the Irish troubles were at their worst it was still possible for anyone to move at will about the country without restriction. To go on leave the regulation way, officers were supposed to go to Limerick or some centre, and there wait in a protected hotel till a protected train

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

was going to Cork. It might take days to get aboard ship. It was quicker and more stimulating to put on some old clothes, slip a gun in a pocket, and fade away *via* Dublin. An individual in plain clothes, armed, could move at will without much risk. He could get from Great Britain into Ireland, armed, with the greatest of ease. The authorities could only ask if he had any arms or ammunition and look in his luggage to check his answer. They could not pat him to see what he had in his pockets.

In Palestine no attempt was ever made to control the movements of the inhabitants. As a result, control by the leaders on the other side was never attacked, the theory being, perhaps, that they were all busy doing their best to stop acts of violence. They could telephone at will all over the country, move as they pleased, receive reports and send out instructions, without let or hindrance.

It is true that in Ireland the leaders were well hidden, but still maintained control. Not only did they continue to control, but they managed to publish, almost weekly, a printed sheet dealing with the tactical training and employment in action of their armed forces, showing how to improve both in the

## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

light of the most recent experience. Nevertheless, these achievements should be linked with the fact that we did not control movement. It is true that under the most rigorous control, the German control of Belgium, secret organisations, for concealing wanted men or helping them to escape from the country, often succeeded. But we know more of the successes than of the failures, and we know what difficulties and dangers faced those who tried to evade rule.

A policy of direct attack on leaders would have to be combined with other means of establishing full control by Government in any case. A commander exercising undivided military control with statutory martial law powers could not just wait till the leaders on the other side chose to contravene his regulations. He would have to be active in other directions. His greatest difficulty would be to gain the initiative and escape from having to react to action by the other side. The obstacle to escape from that unsatisfactory predicament is the need to hold the whole country for political reasons. We have never yet, in sub-war, given up, for example, Kerry and Clare, or the Nablus district, in order to concentrate force in more important areas and control them first before

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

proceeding to full control of the less important. We have always held the whole country, though, as already explained, that means holding only cities and towns and the main railways and roads between them. The rest of the country is almost invariably free to the other side, except when striking forces invade it for brief periods.

The military problem of defeating sub-war requires something more than just holding centres and main communications. It requires a carefully planned and methodically executed combing of the country area by area. That is a slow process, as the history of the South African War of 1899-1902 shows. In that war, while it took one-third of the period of its duration to defeat the hostile forces in the field, two-thirds, or twenty months, were spent in dealing with the guerrilla warfare phase. Not only is the process very slow, but it requires reinforcements of troops.

That brings us back to what we seek to avoid, slow progress to absolute control, during which sub-war drags on. As a solution, undivided military control sounds very well, but it really means handing over three parts of rule—civil, police, and legal—to the head of the fourth at a time when he is particularly



## SUB-WAR—MARTIAL LAW

busy with his own part. Since he would have to exercise control of everything—police, posts and telegraphs, railways, the Press, food supplies, movement of inhabitants, including such things as immigration and tourist traffic—he would have to prepare plans for the exercise of his control. It is easy just to say that instead of the military aiding the civil power, the weight is just placed on the other foot and the civil power aids the military. There are, however, all manner of rules for military aid to the civil power, but none yet exist for civil aid to a commander exercising undivided military control.

There is a big difference between leaving it to one man to co-ordinate the action of the four parts of rule, when the occasion arises, and having all the main points and difficulties settled before the occasion arises. There is, in fact, a difference between this somewhat vague idea of undivided military control with statutory martial law as distinct from emergency rule under one supreme head, using all four parts of rule in co-operation, on a system, all thought out and ready for the occasion. Our difficulties in the past have been due to failure to treat sub-war as a problem, requiring concerted plans to deal with it quickly.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION.

WHILE it is easy enough to criticise, it is not so easy to make useful suggestions about what should be done to meet the evil of sub-war. The evil of the thing is that it is a violation of peace. The evil in dealing with it is that we permit armistice, then compromise. In fact, we make concession to aggression, and thereby encourage resort to force.

Resort to force to gain an end is against the interest of the public weal of the world, which is at one with British interest, in that both require disputes to be submitted to judgment and not to the arbitrament of arms. It is in the interest of the world and of Britain that British policy in action within Britain's sphere of rule should stand firm against aggression instead of yielding to it.

Sub-war within the Colonial Empire, which includes British mandates as distinct from

## SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION

Dominion mandates, within the Indian Empire, or in Burma, is surely rebellion against British rule. Once rebellion has begun, the grievance, even though Britain may have been slow in redressing it, must await consideration till resort to force has been dealt with decisively, and that means dealt with victoriously without concession of any kind. It is better to win first and then give, as we did in South Africa, than do as we did in Ireland in 1921 and are doing now in Palestine.

The evil on our side is not only due to our yielding attitude, but also to our inability to co-ordinate the four parts of British rule most directly concerned with the problem—the civil, the police, the legal, and the military parts. The responsibility for co-ordinating the action of these four parts lies with the civil power. The question is whether the civil power does consider that resort to force must be stopped promptly and decisively before any consideration is given to the grievance which may have prompted it. If the civil power does not follow the policy that resort to force must be stopped promptly and decisively, then there never can be successful co-ordination, because there never can be unity of purpose. Neither the police

part nor the military part of British rule will willingly be used as dogs in a dog-fight, not to win, but to produce concession to those who kill their friends.

There was excellent co-ordination between the working parts, then only three—civil, legal, and military—in 1746, because rebellion was then rebellion to all, and to all a thing to be dealt with in only one way, by absolute victory. That was not so only because England was invaded. Derby was farther from London then than either Dublin or Jerusalem is to-day, in time. It took from the middle of February till the middle of April to move British forces from Edinburgh to Inverness without opposition in 1746. It was not so only because Britain was heavily involved in war on the Continent when the rebellion broke out. Britain was heavily involved in war on the Continent in 1916, and in the defence of the Mediterranean and the frontier of Egypt in 1936. It was so because there was unity of purpose. Real co-operation and effective co-ordination of working parts depends on unity of purpose.

Given unity of purpose, there still remain difficulties in co-ordination on the physical side. The difficulties, it is suggested, might be

## SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION

overcome if the problem of sub-war were considered quite apart from any particular case and settled for general application in cold blood between rebellions. It would be ideal if a governor, a chief of police, a judge, and a general, with representatives of the Colonial Office and of the India Office, could be assembled to consider the problem and make recommendations. Many of the points with which they would have to deal could not be settled by a military commander promised or exercising undivided military control at a distance.

Assuming that this committee would agree that resort to force must be stopped quickly, the first point to decide in principle would be when the change from normal civil control to emergency rule, under a supreme head, should be made. The point is really the diagnosis of the disease. If the thing is just a local riot over some religious dispute, a cold in the head, there is no need to apply the cure for malignant malaria. But as soon as the movement of the other side is seen to be directed against government, with signs of central control, it is time to think of curing sub-war. As soon as intimidation and the use of arms appear it is time to apply the cure.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

If the resort to force requires military aid to the police it should be for the general to say how far that aid can be extended. It must stop before the plan for exercising undivided control is upset. There is a difficulty here which requires to be met. It is for the governor to decide when to apply emergency rule. If a general is to have power to say "No" at a certain point—namely, the extension of military aid to the police—he virtually decides, and not the governor. That is where trouble has always arisen in the past. In case of disagreement the solution seems to be to refer to a higher authority. But the general should have the right to ask for reinforcements if military aid to the civil power is to go on, so that he can keep his plan intact. Then, if reinforcements cannot be provided, the change to emergency rule should be made.

The next point is whether, on the introduction of emergency rule, control should be by a military commander. There are advantages in the exercise of control by a man free from political problems and concerned only with the point at issue, the establishment of absolute control by government. He will need advice on the political problems connected with that.

## SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION

But if the governor remains to advise, retaining powers to exercise clemency, control will not be undivided.

If control is to be by a military commander he should not also command the military forces directly, because his main task will be to rule a country under abnormal conditions. A new commander of the forces will be necessary. The military staff of the headquarters of any garrison is designed to manage that garrison and not to co-ordinate and control the four parts of rule in action. Therefore, the commander exercising undivided control requires a new staff. On that staff there will have to be representatives of the civil administration, the police, and the law, all three of which will have to split into two parts, one part concerned with emergency rule and the other with normal administration.

These points could not be settled by a commander to whom power might be delegated. He would have to refer to higher authority, and higher authority would probably refuse to move in the matter till the moment of delegation arrived. Then it would be too late. Such points cannot be settled in a hurry, and our ponderous Whitehall system cannot trot. In

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

September 1936, when rebellion in Palestine was in its fifth month, there was talk of imposing martial law, and reinforcements were being rushed out from England. But it took all September and half October to decide the form which martial law was to assume and the powers which might be delegated to the commander. In the end, the question was not decided till four days after the rebellion had degenerated into armistice.

The four parts of rule require some adjustment if they are to work well together to defeat sub-war. Though a commander would have power to make regulations to re-establish public security, it is not yet clear whether he would have power to reorganise the four parts of rule to suit his purpose. There is room for improvement in the intelligence service. The police being on the spot should know the country and its inhabitants better than anyone else. But usually the police and military intelligence services remain quite distinct, and there is a great deal of overlap and waste of energy.

There are other directions in which police and military co-operation might be improved. The police in sub-war tend to become soldiers, but the soldiers display no tendency to become



## SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION

police. The soldiers require guides and interpreters, and the police can supply both. Very often the most useful members of the police become marked down for assassination by the other side. This danger could be overcome if men required for special duty by the military could fade into military units and military uniform for the duration of the rebellion. In general, duties under arms should be carried out by one body under one control. If all the police have to be armed, they might as well be merged into the military forces for the time being.

On the legal side, likewise, there is room for economy of energy. There is no valid reason why military officers should be hauled away from their men and their normal duties to become, at courts-martial on inhabitants, judges and lawyers, when there are British judges and lawyers available. In sub-war normal cases become relatively unimportant, and could well stand some increase in the law's delays, whereas cases connected with the re-establishment of order cannot wait.

So much for questions of organisation ; there remain several questions of policy or strategy to be settled if sub-war is to be defeated quickly.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

The first of these is the question of dealing with leaders on the other side. Some adjustment of the law seems necessary to enable immediate action to be taken against leaders, on account of the consequences of their acts. Chasing after followers who ambush, or lay land-mines, is very necessary, but it does not lead quickly to decisive results. Chasing after leaders we make difficult for ourselves. It is merely dodging the issue to intern them without trial.

There are also the questions of cutting off parts of the country in order to economise force, of restriction on the movement of the people, of restrictions on trade, of control of all subscriptions to causes of all kinds, of control of banks, and payments from abroad. There remains the important problem of dealing with intimidation of witnesses. The intimidation of inhabitants, and sometimes even of police, is based on the procedure followed at trials. To defeat the 'foul disease,' drastic change in procedure seems necessary, even to the extent of allowing the Court to satisfy itself that evidence is good, and allowing the prosecutor to read the evidence without disclosing the name of the witness. Finally, there is the question whether the thing should not be called

## SUB-WAR—CONCLUSION

emergency rule instead of martial law, which it is not.

Objections would no doubt be raised against examination of the problem of rule in face of sub-war, as suggested. There would be the objection that situations vary so much, that each should be dealt with on its merits as it arises. To yield to that objection would mean throwing all the experience of Ireland, Palestine, and elsewhere into the sea and starting afresh on the next occasion. The other side gains if we keep on losing or mislaying all our past experience of a danger to our rule. We only preserve tactical lessons, how to move in convoy and how to fight when attacked in convoy, experience of use to one part of rule only.

In September 1936 the imposition of martial law in Palestine was imminent. But those who were working against time to have everything ready, had nothing from the past to guide them. They had to begin all over again from the beginning, as if rebellion had never before troubled the British Empire. They could not get the rules of martial law from a Government office as one might get the rules of golf from the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. It had not even been decided what game was

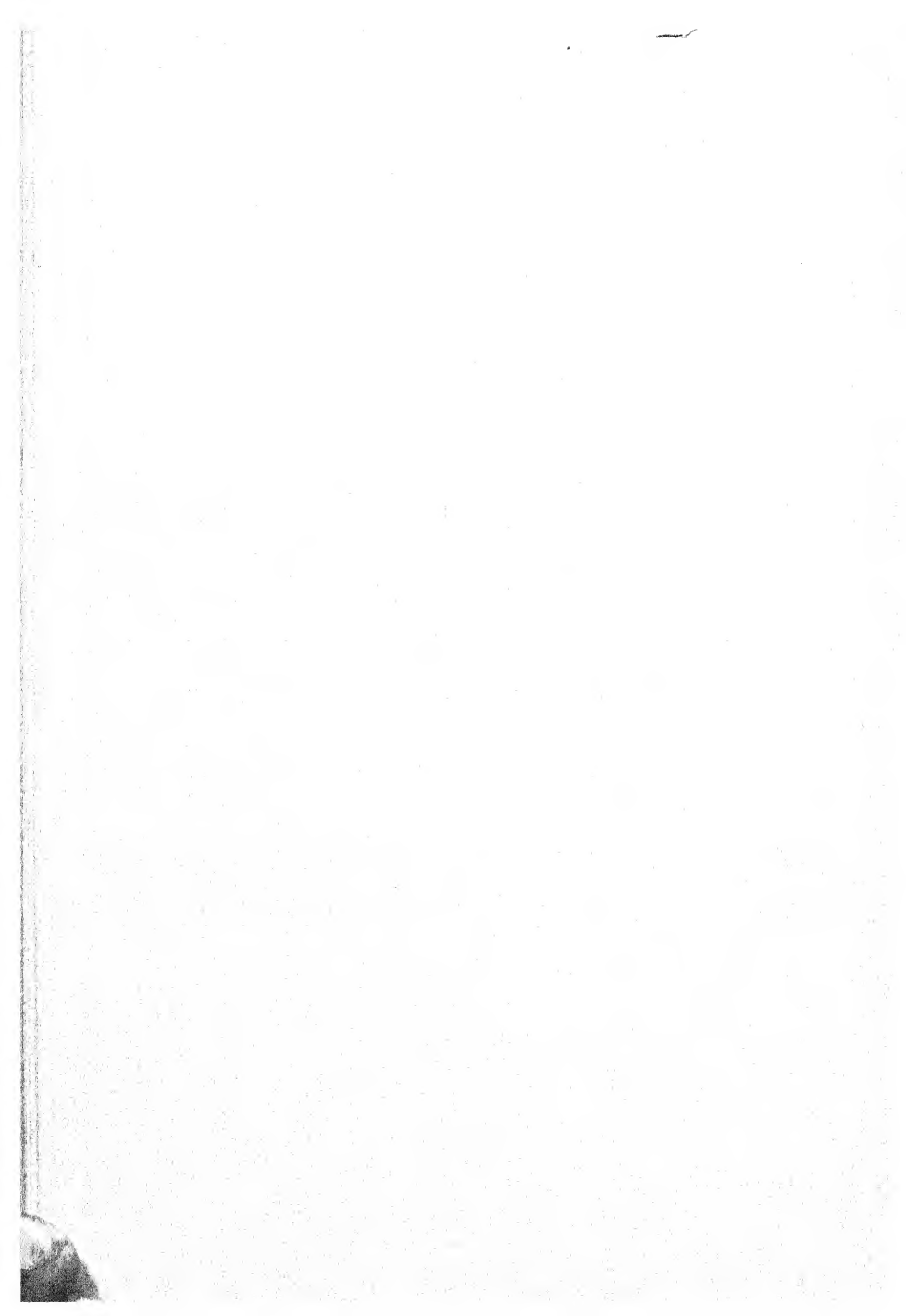
## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

to be played: martial law, which needs few rules, or statutory martial law, which needs many.

Those who stage and control rebellion or sub-war set out on a somewhat risky enterprise. There is good reason to suppose, from the available evidence, that they study their problems carefully beforehand and take care to learn from those who have had experience. There is a remarkable similarity, in recent years, in the form and procedure of attack by force on government. The conduct of sub-war by the other side is a new technique which does not vary in principle, but only in details of application, between place and place. The urge of impatient nationalism should not be allowed to produce better staff work than the urge to fulfil the purpose of British rule.

Sub-war is an evil, a nuisance, and a danger. Though it may seem to lack power to overthrow a British Government anywhere, even if met in the present casual way, it has power to divert H.M. Forces to places in which it may be most inconvenient or even dangerous to have them gripped. Should these forces have to be diverted in a war, it would be essential to know how to defeat sub-war quickly.

PART II.  
IN PARTICULAR, PALESTINE, 1936-37



## CHAPTER IX.

### PALESTINE.

THE events of 1936 in Palestine provide the most recent example of British rule in face of a rebellion conducted on sub-war lines. There is reason to record some of the lessons of that six months of confusion in case they may be forgotten. There is also reason to turn from a general consideration of rule and rebellion, under modern conditions, to the study of a particular case. The difference between the one and the other resembles the difference between reading and seeing a play.

Generalities lack the personal element, which counts for so much. In generalities one does not feel the moment when the future hangs on a decision, nor long to warn one player that all his mountains are molehills and beg him to stop wringing his hands. One does not see another calmly reaping where he has not sown and long to call his bluff, while at the same time

## BRITISH RULE AND REBELLION

admiring the impertinent use he makes of all his opportunities.

However, it is necessary first of all to take a quick tour round Palestine to see it as it was in early 1936, and is, in all essentials, still. Fortunately, there is not much of it, and we need not bother about that long narrow triangle of almost empty desert stretching away south for a hundred miles to its apex at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. What matters is only 130 miles long by 70 wide at the south, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, narrowing to just over thirty miles wide along the northern frontier.

The points of importance are the towns and the communications, particularly those which serve as ways in for us, the main line from Kantara on the Suez Canal along the coast to Haifa, and Haifa itself, the only suitable port of entry. Another point of importance in the circumstances is the distribution of the Jewish settlements. With a hundred thousand times ten Arabs competing with as many times four Jews for the same country, the ruler had every prospect of doing a deal of ruling.

One normally arrives in Palestine from Port Said *via* Kantara, the journey taking just



## PALESTINE

about twelve hours to either Haifa or Jerusalem. After covering more than half the distance through Egyptian desert comes the frontier, and twenty miles inside Palestine, Gaza. Gaza has an aerodrome, one of the chain to the Far East, but is otherwise a secondary Arab town in a completely Arab area stretching away east to the Dead Sea. All the south of Palestine, in the area Bethlehem, Hebron, Beersheba, Gaza, is Arab, but for two small Jewish settlements, one fifteen miles east of Gaza and the other just south of Bethlehem. It is an extensive area for Palestine, but relatively unimportant. In it desert merges into cultivation and the plain into hills. The communications are poor, all tracks, but for the railway and road leading north along the coast from Gaza, and the road from Beersheba through Hebron to Jerusalem.

Soon after passing Gaza northward the country becomes more fertile, and the area of Jewish settlement and orange groves begins. By the time Lydda is reached, an hour and a half from Gaza by train and about the same by road, one is in the midst of Jewish settlements, and can see the contrast between the squat, solid, closely grouped stone houses of an Arab

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

village and the ramshackle wooden bungalows of a Jewish one, looking like some new place in the once wild West, deserving a name like Medicine Hat. One can see also the contrast between the picturesque flowing garments of the Arabs, capped by the thing like a duster, trailing to three points over the shoulders, which they wear on their heads, held there by what looks like a couple of turns of thin black rope, and the comparative nakedness of the Jews in shirts and shorts, and, as often as not, bare-headed. However, we are just as bad ourselves in most hot countries.

Lydda, an Arab town, is surrounded by Jewish settlements; an eight-mile half-moon lies all round the south of it; a ten by five mile egg five miles to the west of it, and south of that again a V with eight-mile legs and a detached egg. Ten miles north-west of Lydda lie the cities and ports of controversy, Jaffa and Tel Aviv, side by side. It takes no time to get there by a first-class road, and there lies contrast that shouts. Jaffa is all Arab, with good streets mixed with warrens, open shop fronts, much sitting about, and not much traffic. Tel Aviv seems invisibly darned to the north of Jaffa, but there is no mistaking it. It teems with

## PALESTINE

life, traffic like Hammersmith Broadway, cafés, streets full of people buying from each other's shops, and houses in every stage of construction and of every ultra-modern shape. It looks like the site of a competition, open to architects and builders in concrete. On the northern edge of Tel Aviv, with its back to the sea-front, stands the Levant Fair, a jerry-built White City, and just behind it across the sands is the famous Tel Aviv jetty.

The coast of Palestine being a straight line all the way to Haifa, there are no harbours but Haifa. At Jaffa, ships anchored a mile or so offshore and took in and discharged cargo from lighters. The Arabs owned and worked the lighters, employing lightermen expert in handling them in spite of the surf. The lighters were kept in a harbour constructed for them at Jaffa. The Jews of Tel Aviv and the neighbourhood had most of the trade, so when fighting broke out in April 1936 between Arabs and Jews, or, in other words, Jaffa and Tel Aviv, the Arab lightermen went on strike. Furthermore, they stayed on strike throughout the 1936 rebellion, that being their contribution to the nationalist cause. The Jews then built a jetty at Tel Aviv from which goods can be

loaded into or unloaded from lighters. They also built a lighter anchorage, and seem to have been able to blow the bluff off the word expert, as far as lightermen are concerned. They will, no doubt, soon have transit sheds on the spot instead of a Levant Fair, and that will be that.

Continuing the journey northward from Lydda by train one notices at once that the hills to the east seem to be edging nearer and nearer to the sea, lying somewhere close to the west, hidden by a low ridge covered by orange groves. The train runs on through a wide plain with unfenced fields. Soon fingers from the hills extend closer to the line, with here and there Arab villages of dumpy, solid, flat-roofed, stone houses clustered on their knuckles.

Fifteen miles north of Lydda is Qalqilya, an Arab village, and ten miles farther on Tulkarm, another. Up to there all on the right of the line has been Arab, Arab for miles, up into the hills and beyond; all to the left has been Jew, Jew to the sea, four great fat eggs of Jewish settlements, almost continuous, filling the plain. At Tulkarm the hills come right down to the railway line, which retaliates by edging away from them and making for the sea. Twenty miles north of Tulkarm the line unmistakably

## PALESTINE

arrives at the sea, but the hills keep chasing after it. Ten miles farther on another nest of three Jewish settlements has been passed, the first two small, only three or four miles across, the third, a regular cuckoo's egg fifteen miles in length. On the left lie sand-dunes, the sea obviously close, then a ruined castle on a knob, and soon the line is almost jostled on to the beach by Mount Carmel.

For five miles north of the cuckoo's egg there is nothing but the steep scrub-covered slopes of Mount Carmel on the right and the twinkling Mediterranean, breaking languidly on a straight line of sand, on the left. Then, suddenly, the train finds itself running into the sea, dead ahead, and saves itself by turning east round the curve of another Jewish egg, number thirteen settlement, and so into Haifa. The smokestacks and masts of ships show over the tops of lines of sheds, on the left the houses thicken and close in, while close and high on the right, Mount Carmel seems to have allowed itself to be crowned with a kind of Hindhead.

If one did not enter Palestine *via* Gaza by train the alternative would normally be to arrive by sea at Haifa. Haifa is a strange place. All the flat part down by the harbour is Arab,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

except a neat little German corner. The upper part and the crown on the top of Mount Carmel is Jewish. The crown resembles a half-finished hill station, with roads twisting about in loops and curves, all ready for more houses to spring up. The price of land up there rivals the price in the middle of London. The shapes of the houses, each one standing in its own plot, vary as much as in Tel Aviv. They are of stone or concrete, and almost all are new, except for an occasional copper-roofed German bungalow. In the evening the central Jewish part of Haifa is thronged, dense crowds bustling round the cinemas, while below, on the flat, the streets are almost deserted.

From Haifa one can go to Syria, either by toy train to Damascus, or by car along the coast road through Acre, which lies white in the sun eight miles away across the crescent-shaped bay. The frontier is quite close, only twelve miles beyond Acre, so one can be in Syria within the hour. Better perhaps to take the toy train and see more Jewish colonies.

The train turns its back on the sea and heads inland towards the south-east. Once more the steep scrub-covered slopes of Mount Carmel lie close on the right, and again the plain on the

## PALESTINE

left is colonised by Jews. The plain narrows about ten miles from Haifa, and then gradually widens. Finding more room, the line edges away from Mount Carmel, stretched out seaward like a great thumb from the mountain hand of Palestine. Mount Carmel is all Arab, but for the little nail at the tip, the Jewish Hindhead.

The plain looks extremely fertile, and has now widened to five miles, and soon widens to ten. About twenty-five miles from Haifa, soon after Affula, the line begins to go downhill. The town, perched high on the top of a hill away across the plain on the left, is Nazareth. It fades from sight as the toy train trundles down and down to Beisan, fifteen miles farther on. The line did not seem to climb at all from sea-level at Haifa, but it has definitely descended to Beisan, only three miles from the Jordan, deep in that great trench which holds the Sea of Galilee, the winding Jordan, and the fifty mile by ten Dead Sea. For miles and miles across the front stretches the trench wall on the farther side, the Mountains of Moab. And all the way to Beisan, which is Arab, there have been Jewish colonies extending over the plain, five of them, almost touching and continuous

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

for all the forty miles, not far after all, but all the width of Palestine. What a little place is Palestine, only three miles of it left, and then beyond the river lies Transjordan, an Arab state with an Arab ruler, but in the mandate. There are no Jews there, where the inhabitants may walk about with rifles over their shoulders, and do.

The toy line does not seem to like the look of Transjordan and turns abruptly north, still swinging down among the rounded spurs of reasonable hills. Just after crossing the pipeline, pushing Iraq oil to Haifa, it crosses the Jordan, enters another Jewish settlement, and passes close by the hydro-electric station, from which pylons bearing high tension cables radiate away westward to illuminate the chosen. Five miles on lies the Sea of Galilee, or Lake Tiberias, looking rather like a loch in Scotland if the clouds hang low. The toy train seems to hate water for it turns again away, this time back to east, and departs into Syria.

Enough of that line and its toy train. From Samakh a run of half an hour by car, all along the edge of the lake, brings one to Tiberias, part Jew, part Arab, in another Jewish settlement, the largest of a scattered nest of three. From



## PALESTINE

Tiberias it takes only about four hours to run by car right up the spout of Palestine to Metulla, on the Syrian frontier, and back. The road begins along the lakeside, then turns inland and climbs out of the trench back to sea-level, and on a little higher. Soon it comes to a wide plateau stretching northward, bordered on the left by a line of high, steep, rocky hills, which keep on edging closer, while across the plain, on the far side, run the never-ending Mountains of Moab.

About three-quarters of an hour after leaving Tiberias one comes to another large egg-shaped Jewish settlement, number three on the list. They are all numbered. The one level with Gaza and out of sight fifteen miles to the east of it was number twenty-six. Five miles up to the left, on the top of a high and very rocky hill, lies Safad and another Jewish settlement. Safad, the town, is mainly Arab, but has a quarter in it full of Jews of the orthodox variety, settled there long before Zionism was invented. Safad is not a peaceful place.

A mile after passing the road leading up to Safad, the road to Damascus forks off half right, dead straight across the plain towards the Jordan. The less good-looking one ahead is

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

ours, no longer tarmac. The plain on the right becomes flatter and wetter as the shallow waters of Lake Hule come into sight. This plain is something quite unusual for arid Palestine; its grass looks real, and there are cattle grazing out in the distance and even water-buffaloes. North of Hule lies a wide stretch of marshy delta land, then comes a knob with an Arab village on it, then another; the ground begins to rise, the plain is ending. The steep craggy hills close on the left keep on and on, but now hills like them lie ahead. The road enters a valley and climbs. Suddenly, up at the top, one enters a Jewish village in settlement number two, and a mile or so on lies number one, right on the Syrian frontier, both miles deep in the midst of Arab country.

All the north of Palestine is Arab, an area of jumbled hills forty miles by twenty. Except for these two odd little colonies perched on the hill-tops right at the tip of the spout of Palestine, and the one at Safad, the settlements lie almost entirely in the plains, in a zigzag line like the conventional sign for a flash of lightning. They zig south down the Jordan valley to Arab Beisan, then zag north-west to Haifa and the sea, and zig again all down the coastal plain almost

## PALESTINE

to Gaza. All the south and all the north, so also all the centre of Palestine, sixty miles by forty, is Arab. In fact, all the land between the Jewish zigs and zag is Arab and almost all highland.

Zionism, an idea, put the Jews there in that zigzag, all busy creating national homes for themselves, though not all by themselves. We defend them, more or less. Ideas are odd things, and some a nuisance. An idea, worked up, can end by filling a theatre night after night for a year or more, pulling people away from their homes, all dressed up and full of early dinner, or make them sit for hours on stools in drafty streets sustained by sandwiches. The Zion idea began probably because somebody refused to forget the past. Somehow Britain asked the author whether he would like to stage it in Kenya, or some such place. Instead of arguing whether the idea was any good at all, the debate raged round the proper place to stage it. The author of course chose Palestine, and Britain agreed. So there it is, and it is no use not facing facts.

So far, our tour has all been on the flat and all among the Jews. There is plenty of Palestine left, but its Arab highlands are hard to see and

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

know. One needs to walk a lot to get at these villages, some crowning the highest hill-top, some hanging somehow terraced on a slope, a few more comfortably and naturally planted in a valley. One needs to talk a lot and sit a lot to know the people, and even then the knowledge will be superficial, because the Arab talks so easily and so much himself, yet keeps back more than he expresses.

Back to Tiberias, bound thence for Jerusalem by car. The road is excellent, but narrow for the way the people drive, furiously and in the middle of the road. That would not matter so much if the road were only straight, but hairpin bends and blind bends and every kind of bend flourishes in such a hilly country. From Tiberias one climbs straight out of the trench, and soon, down on a spur on the right, appears a village in a Jewish settlement, built like a ringed camp to be defended. All the twenty miles to Nazareth the country is hilly, but wide and open, good spacy land.

From Nazareth one could go on to Haifa, but that would mean running back a mile or two north of the toy railway line again, and there is no road on from Haifa ; it stops just round the point of Mount Carmel. So from Nazareth

## PALESTINE

we turn south for Jenin, another twenty miles ahead. From the outskirts of the town, full of Christian Arabs, the road begins to twist and swing and hairpin abruptly downward to the plain among young plantations of fir grouped among the rocks. As soon as it reaches level ground the road runs straight with a line of blue gums on either hand, crosses the pipe-line, then the toy railway at Affula, and begins to rise and swing over open rolling country. To the right the ground falls almost imperceptibly, with the long ridge of Mount Carmel in the distance. To the left it falls unmistakably for some miles, and then drops steeply into the great trench towards Beisan. Up we go gently, over a low rounded shoulder. The hills ahead, where the thumb, Mount Carmel, joins the mountain hand, come rapidly closer, then gently down we go and into Jenin, a small town extended in a curve.

The next lap to Nablus takes an hour. Soon after Jenin, we enter the land of olive groves and goats, of villages on the tops and on the steep sides of hills and low in terraced valleys. The road twists and turns, climbs and drops. Sometimes there is open ground and a wide view to the right, but on the left the hills are high and

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

close. Another toy railway keeps company with us, but is very little used and does not pay. After a narrow twisty bit among a tangled group of hills one comes suddenly into a wide valley branching right and left. We go up it to the left; the toy railway goes both ways, down to the right to Tulkarm, twelve miles away on the main Gaza-Haifa line, and up to the left to Nablus with us. The valley is pretty, with terraced fields on either side and high hills rising abruptly above them. It curves left and right gently, and gently rises. Then the hills close in and in the narrow space between their dominating shoulders, lies Nablus. Nablus is chiefly famous for the truculence of its inhabitants and a soap factory.

Quickly passing through a corner of this beautiful but ill-mannered place, we emerge from between the jostling hills to find a wide plain facing us. The road turns sharp right along the foot of the hills with the plain on the left, and heads for Jerusalem, just over an hour away. The road is bewilderingly changeable. It runs either in the bottom of a valley or along the crest of a ridge, selecting whichever suits best its southward direction. When deep in a valley the mouth of any highwayman or rebel

## PALESTINE

must water freely with such a wealth of choice spots for an ambush. The hills are steep and all along their sides, in horizontal lines, runs steps of rock the height of a man, while under them or in among the clefts of larger cliffs are caves. It requires an athlete to pursue a bandit in that land, with the eyes of a hawk and the nose of a dog to see or find where the quarry has vanished into the earth. When the road is up on a crest, however, the country is much more open. The last lap of the run to Jerusalem is mainly open, the ground falling away steeply to the Jordan valley from close on the left, while on the right the valleys screw a path down through the crowded hills towards the coastal plain.

About five miles short of Jerusalem the road runs through the middle of the landing ground which serves the capital, and enters another egg-shaped Jewish settlement. There is a little detached nest of five of them about Jerusalem, numbered twenty-seven to thirty-one. The largest, number twenty-eight, almost rings the Holy City. Suddenly, just after topping a rise, Jerusalem appears close ahead, a big place with nothing old about it at first sight. In fact, this new Jerusalem looks extremely new,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

with modern stone-built churches, church schools, church hospitals, church steeples and church flags, consulates and more flags, houses large and small, mostly of stone and new, then some shops, and finally a large hotel, looking very new. Not till one looks out of a back window in this hotel does anything old appear at all, the western face of the old city wall and the keep, King David's Tower. But even they look surprisingly new, except in shape, and everything in sight beyond them, rising high out of the hidden old city, looks churchy and extremely new.

To complete this cursory run round Palestine requires but two short expeditions, each of an hour by road and each downhill. To the west the road runs down to Jaffa on the sea, or to Lydda on the railway. For half the way it twists and turns among the rocky barren hills, down to terraces and cultivation, then out through a narrow curving valley on to the open gentle slopes of the plain. The run by train to Lydda from Jerusalem takes twice as long and offers even better scope to ambushers. The line drops at an even grade, keeping always fifty feet or so above a dry and rocky water-course. It swings and curves and winds through



## PALESTINE

a maze of valleys, sinking always deeper among the hills, so steep and scarred by crags and rocks that one must press against the window and look up to see their skyline.

Down to the west from Jerusalem there are trees and fields, but down to the east there is very soon nothing but increasing desert as one goes down and down to thirteen hundred feet below sea-level. Then in a wilderness like a landscape on the moon, the road forks. To the left lies Jericho, an oasis watered by clear streams gushing from the ugly broken face of the barren hills, a face like that of a colossal crumbling bunker. On beyond Jericho, famous for its bananas and grape fruit, the road runs gently down the slope towards the Jordan into a jumbled mess of sun-baked mud and sand the moon might blush to own. Here there are a few things green, keeping as close to the river as possible, and here, on either side of Allenby Bridge, are the customs posts of Palestine and Transjordan. The road leads on into better country, up a long valley beside water, up to the tops of the hills and rolling open country to Aman, the capital of Transjordan, about two hours beyond Jericho.

Back in the wilderness where the road forked,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the right branch leads to the Dead Sea, five miles away at the foot of a slowly descending slope. There, at Kallia, the last of the Jewish settlements, number thirty-two, the Palestine Potash Company sucks chemicals out of the heavy waters of the Dead Sea, with the help of Arab labour.

## CHAPTER X.

### RULERS AND RULED.

TWICE the Army of Britain, the Dominions, and India tried to enter Palestine in the spring of 1917 by Gaza from Egypt, once in March and once again in April. Twice it failed. Not till November of that same year, 1917, did it try again, and by the 7th it succeeded.

On the 2nd of November 1917, before that third attempt had reached success, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs published a statement of policy : " His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of that object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

That was the Balfour Declaration, made by a man who had great experience of Ireland, and the effect of the plantation of people of one race and creed in a country mostly inhabited by a people of a different race and creed. The Declaration was made in the year which followed the 1916 rebellion in that same Ireland. It was made before Palestine had been conquered, and before the war had been won in the main theatre of operations on the Continent of Europe.

It does not matter much now whether the Balfour Declaration was meant to mean anything, or what it means ; or whether the British Cabinet deliberately intended to create a second Ireland in Palestine, before it had solved the problem of the first in Ireland. What does matter now, in determining the course of the future, is what has been done since in Palestine. The place where we stand now and the things which we have done up till now in Palestine must be the guide to our future course, if it is to be graded gently and not to follow a series of violent jerks, each blindly designed to counter the evils of the last.

In 1918 we conquered Palestine and set up a military administration to govern the country,

## RULERS AND RULED

which took it over as we conquered it. In that conquest of Palestine we were assisted by Arab forces under Arab leaders, who had rebelled against their ruler, our enemy, the Turk. The assistance of these Arabs helped us a great deal, but we would have succeeded in the end without it. The Arabs of Palestine did not help us. They were voluntarily or forcibly serving the Turk. However, in November 1918, in agreement with the French, we published a declaration to the Arabs that we were only concerned to ensure, "by their support and by adequate assistance, the regular working of governments and administrations freely chosen by the populations themselves." We suffer from too many declarations. They tend to hamper rather than to help rule.

In our conquest of Palestine we were also assisted by Jews in Palestine and by others from England, and some four Jewish battalions took part in the campaign. But again we would have succeeded without them. Politically, however, the Jews were very quick off the mark. Six months before the final conquest of Palestine in September 1918 a Zionist Commission was for some reason let loose in Palestine, ostensibly to control the Jewish population and keep the military

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

administration on the correct path regarding questions Jewish. A military administration is fair and indeed inevitable, just after a conquest, when the country is more or less in balk and its future still remains to be determined. But it is quite another matter to let protagonists of a mere fraction of the whole population of the invaded State, loose to organise and arrange the future of their folk, before more than half the country has been conquered. However, that is one of the peculiar things we did, and the Jews took full advantage of a flying start.

It was not till July 1920, almost two years after the Turks had been driven out of Palestine and Syria, that the military administration of Palestine came to an end, and was replaced by a civil Government under a High Commissioner. The first High Commissioner was a Jew. That is another of the peculiar things we did. However, it is necessary to bear in mind the conditions which prevailed at that time, 1920. They were not very favourable conditions for careful thought, nor for the evolution of a long-sighted policy.

There were plenty of clamant situations in 1920 : the birth of the League of Nations ; the doings of that loose cat, self-determination, fresh

## RULERS AND RULED

from its bag ; war debts ; the tail end of demobilisation ; the peace treaties and all the conferences connected with them ; strikes in Britain and rebellion in Ireland. When one whole nation was almost forgotten, the Turk, Palestine could hardly expect much attention from the limelight. It had, however, received the attention of a Commission from the United States, which investigated its problems in 1919 and made comprehensive recommendations for one big mandate to include Syria and Palestine. That Commission undoubtedly saw things in proportion and free from the competitive claims of French, British, and Jews. But, in spite of declarations about governments and administrations freely chosen by the populations themselves, in spite of the popularity of self-determination, the interests of the future rulers of little mandates prevailed, and no more was heard of the big mandate proposal.

It is also necessary to bear in mind the effect of a sudden change from war to peace. Peace is a slow-moving thing ; war is extremely fast, requiring great energy to maintain the pace. We began the war with rulers of the slow-moving type, and soon had to replace them by others more adaptable to the pressing and

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

ever-changing needs of the moment. The head of the new War Cabinet had a flair for balancing the needs of the moment, and could even accept new contributions, varying, one might say, from standard lamps to billiard balls, without upsetting anything or becoming upset himself. When the war ended he continued to juggle. In fact, a usual tendency in history was much in evidence, to go on doing to-day and planning to do to-morrow what did very well for yesterday. So situations requiring sedate thought were juggled in accordance with habit acquired in the rush of war.

The League of Nations had been in existence for two years before the mandate for Palestine was granted to Britain in 1922. Two years had been spent in haggling over the terms of the lease. In the end, Britain had her way and obtained the lease, worded as she wished to have it worded and containing the Balfour Declaration. Palestine being a first-class mandate, the intention was, and still is, that its inhabitants shall be gently nursed in the art of government and administration till they reach the stage of standing on their own feet and governing themselves. That, however, demands two conditions for success: firstly, that the



## RULERS AND RULED

inhabitants shall be capable of working together ; and secondly, that the Government shall be capable of teaching them how to rule. There has never been much sign of either condition in Palestine.

Even by 1922 Britain had done quite a lot to ensure that Jews and Arabs would not work together. They loathed each other to begin with. The casual wording of the Balfour Declaration, with its division of the inhabitants of Palestine into Jews and non-Jews, the latter at the time being almost all Arabs and in a majority of about ten to one ; the flying start given to the Jewish Commission and the appointment of a Jew, though a very fine one, as the first High Commissioner, did nothing to make them loathe each other less.

It is quite impossible to educate inhabitants to self-government if they hate each other so much that a junior official of one race is one kind of official when dealing with those of his own race and quite another when dealing with those who are not. The only hope then is for a third party to rule, and keep on ruling. However, Britain insists on using Palestinians as officials, and it does not work.

There is no indication that Britain has paid

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

special attention to the selection of her own officials in Palestine to ensure that they could deal with their very difficult task as educators in the art of government. If anything is to be learnt from Palestine regarding that art, it is to be learnt in the negative aspect of how not to do it. That is a pity, because the government of Palestine has to be conducted in full view of most of the world. Whether Britain takes much interest in it or not, she does have to account for her government of Palestine to the League of Nations. So it is odd to find a country, which prides itself on the excellence of its rule in every variety of circumstance, being so unsuccessful in such a public place as Palestine.

From the point of view of the ruler, there was no vital difference between the problem presented by Palestine in 1920, when the civil administration took it over, and in the early months of 1936 before the rebellion. There were two peoples, distantly related but of different culture and language, to be ruled. Both were competing for one country. The Arabs said that they had been promised the land when we won the war, and were still defiantly insisting that it was theirs in 1936. The Jews said that the country was promised

## RULERS AND RULED

to them for the purpose of making a national home, though the rate of progress and date of completion of that experiment were not specified in the promise. We said that the Arabs were not to dominate the Jews and that the Jews were not to dominate the Arabs. The conditions therefore demanded in the ruler power of judgment, of tact, and, above all, of ability to say "No" in a way which left no doubt about the meaning of that word.

There was not much evidence of tact in the ruler who gave a flying start to the Jews, made a Jew first High Commissioner, and sent Lord Balfour to open the new Hebrew University in 1920. There was no evidence of tact regarding the rate of Jewish immigration in the years 1933 to 1936. For six years before 1933 the average rate of immigration had been just under 5000 a year. In 1933 it jumped to 30,000, in 1934 to 42,000, and in 1935 to 62,000. If one asked the civil administration in Palestine what they thought they were doing, they just shrugged their shoulders and put the blame on a thing called "economic capacity to absorb." It was rather like asking a dangerous driver the same question and getting the reply, "It's not me, it's the throttle. It opens and shuts itself."

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Before 1936 there had never been much sign in the ruler of ability to say "No." In April 1920 there were serious attacks by Arabs on Jews in Jerusalem. In May 1921 there were more serious attacks by Arabs on Jews in Jaffa and on Jewish settlements. There were worse attacks in August 1929 at Hebron and at Safad, due to failure to stop incitement by the President of the Supreme Moslem Council or stop provocative processions by both Arabs and Jews. In October 1933 there was a serious Arab rising all over the country, directed against the Government, because it would not stop Jewish immigration. When the rising was stopped, immigration was increased to reach record figures in 1935.

After each of these revolts against rule, there were long inquiries, each of which found the root causes to be Arab objection to having a mandate instead of independence and Arab objection to Jewish immigration. There was nothing new about these discoveries. In any case, both Arab objections were well known to the League of Nations when it, the U.S.A. approving, gave the mandate to rule Palestine to Great Britain in July 1922. The terms of reference probably put it beyond the power of

## RULERS AND RULED

the investigators to find that the ruler was not ruling as required by the facts of the situation. There was no control of the Press, of frontiers, of arms, of propaganda, of Jewish immigration, or of leaders on either side. Whenever the ruled protested or made trouble, attempts were made to conciliate them. The mandate which gave the ruler his charter was in some respects vague and in others contradictory. But when a ruler receives orders of that kind he takes freedom to interpret them, or get them changed, if he is strong, whereas, if he is weak, he fiddles about with the precise meaning of words instead of doing what has to be done, and ends by blaming the orders and not himself.

The form of the government of Palestine seemed ideal for the purpose of ruling under difficult conditions. It looked like a dictatorship. The High Commissioner was paramount. In 1936 he held executive command over the armed forces. The judges and all other officials held office at his pleasure. Though he had an Executive Council of four or five senior officials, and an Advisory Council of about three times as many, he was not obliged to accept the advice of either body. He could make whatever regulations he deemed necessary to maintain or restore

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

public security, though before 1937 offenders against his regulations had to be tried by the ordinary courts of the country. Now, after the experience of 1936, offenders can be tried by military courts, a curious way round a difficulty which should have been removed. The High Commissioner is, however, challengeable by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Ordinances made by him may be disallowed.

Before 1937 the government of Palestine, under the High Commissioner, was organised with a secretariat and three districts, each under a District Commissioner. The head of the secretariat is the Chief Secretary, usually an official from the Colonial Office. In the absence of the High Commissioner, the Chief Secretary acts as head of the administration, with the title Officer Administering the Government. The Chief Secretary is usually so burdened with paper, and certainly was in 1936, that he can rarely leave his office and go about the country to see things for himself. That is a disadvantage in the case of an official who stays in Palestine for a short time only, may arrive there without previous knowledge of the country, and may have to administer the government over the heads of the three District

## RULERS AND RULED

Commissioners, all men older than himself in years and in knowledge of Palestine.

The three administrative districts into which the country was divided before 1936 were Northern, Southern, and Jerusalem. The Northern District has since been split into two. It was the most extensive and the most difficult, as it covered the most nationalist and anti-British Arab hill area. The boundary between it and the other two areas ran straight across the country a few miles north of the line Jericho-Tel Aviv.

The southern part of the country was divided into two districts, Southern and Jerusalem. The Jerusalem District lay to the east and covered the hill country, while the Southern District was mainly in the maritime plain stretching south from Jaffa and widening as it extended towards Gaza and Beersheba. Under the District Commissioners, who were all British, there were District Officers of all three nationalities, British, Arab, or Jewish.

The appearance of dictatorship in the form of the government of Palestine was a myth. The reality was limited in application to the British officials. Before 1936 the Jewish community had its own government, nominally

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

within the government of Palestine, and the Arabs had theirs. The Jewish community, with its flying start, managed to get ahead of the Arabs in arranging to look after itself. It had two wings to its government. One wing dealt with matters religious and cultural, and was based on the rabbis and an elected assembly, which threw off a council having authority to deal with the government of Palestine. The other wing was concerned mainly with the construction of the national home, and took the form of a Jewish Agency. There were Jews and Jews. Factions varying from the equivalent of fascists to communists existed. There were Jews who heartily detested the whole idea of a national home as sponsored by the Zionists, but on the whole the front was kept fairly well united to all outward appearances. The most powerful body was, and still is, the Jewish Agency, which has offices in New Jerusalem, much better placed and more imposing than those of the government of Palestine, hidden away in a hollow near Herod's Gate. As the Report of the Royal Commission states: "This powerful and efficient organisation amounts, in fact, to a government existing side by side with the Mandatory Government."



## RULERS AND RULED

The Moslems, that is to say the Arabs, had a Supreme Moslem Council, brought into being by order of the Palestine Government at the end of 1921. This body controls the Moslem religious courts, the religious endowments, the mosques, and those Moslem schools which are not government schools. The Council consists of a president and four members, who are paid half their salaries from the endowment funds and half by the government of Palestine. The Mufti of Jerusalem became the first president of this Council, and the president is irremovable, according to the conditions by which he holds office. The Mufti, Haj Amin El Husseini, is Mufti for life, according to the conditions by which he holds that office. He was also closely connected, before 1936, with the most powerful Arab political party, the Palestine Arab Party, led by his cousin, Jemal El Husseini. Only one of the half-dozen Arab political parties which existed before 1936 could be called relatively moderate, and then only because it was the party of the Nashashibi family, the traditional rivals of the Husseinis. All opposed the mandate, and so the government of Palestine and Jewish immigration in varying degrees. As the Supreme Moslem Council controlled funds amounting

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

in all to about £100,000 a year by 1936, and controlled the mosques and the religious endowments and the appointments connected with both, without reference to the government, the Mufti, as president, and his family party, the Palestine Arab Party, were in a dominant position.

The attitude of the ruler towards the heads of the Arab part of the ruled is difficult to understand. The Mufti belongs to a family which bore the Arab name equivalent to Black, but the name was changed to Husseini, which sounded better. He was educated in Egypt, served the Turks in the war, and then served under the British military governor of Jerusalem. When the war ended he adopted with enthusiasm the cause of Arab nationalism, even to the extent of playing comic parts in a dramatic society, the aim of which was to raise funds for the movement. In 1920, while 'on the run,' he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for incitement to rebellion, at the time of the Jerusalem riots. In 1921 he was pardoned.

In March 1921 the former Mufti, another Husseini, died, and elections for a successor took place. But the name Haj Amin did not

## RULERS AND RULED

appear among the three at the top, from which one had to be chosen. However, this difficulty was overcome by the withdrawal of one of the three, and Haj Amin was promoted into the zone of selection and duly appointed Mufti by the ruler. In fact, we put him in, in a way which looked very like bribing him with office to be a good boy in the future. And he was a boy, still in his twenties, when he suffered this promotion.

However, the Mufti, to his credit in a way, has remained a consistent Arab nationalist. In 1922 he became president of the new Supreme Moslem Council. In 1929 there were riots, and in 1933 a rising against the government broke out over most of the country. Inquiry in each case pointed a finger at the Mufti for the old offence, incitement, but the Mufti remained Mufti. It must have been easy, therefore, to foretell his attitude in 1936, when trouble broke out again. As will be seen later, he ran the rebellion of that year and consolidated the strong hold, which he already had, over the Arabs of Palestine.

The frequent attempts of Arab sympathisers to wring from the Mufti a declaration that he abhorred violence, as if he objected to the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

action of those who bore arms in his cause, cannot disguise the fact that he controlled the rebellion. He probably did abhor violence as much as those who had to fight against him, but none the less he ran the 1936 rebellion, and very well too. He brought the Royal Commission to Palestine and has made Britain, the Mandatory Power, parade before her overlord the League, to answer for her trusteeship. The honours go to the Mufti, the ruled, and not to the government of Palestine, the ruler.

Both the Jews and the Arabs had in fact succeeded, before 1936, in growing crocodile skins round their respective communities, through which the rule of the government of Palestine hardly penetrated at all. As a result, the inhabitants of Palestine were in two bodies and could only be fused into one, if that was desirable, by the destruction of their skins and the complete penetration of British rule through every particle within. We had, by 1936, created in Palestine an Ireland number two, without the geographical and economic pull we have over the larger body in Ireland, number one.

The ruler had failed to hold true to the facts of the situation, and by his own acts had

## RULERS AND RULED

arranged to lose control. Apart from basing his rule on common-sense, the ruler failed to base it on the mandate, which gave him full power of legislation and administration. Though there were plenty of representatives of the civil power throughout the country, they dealt, in all cases, with one, or possibly with two communities, each having an organisation of its own, and each with a voice speaking in Jerusalem. The voices were seldom silent, and were usually complaining of or objecting to something. As a result, rule in Palestine was over-centralised, the voices in Jerusalem were heard too often, and conciliation took the place of rule. So there was order, followed by counter-order, and, in consequence, disorder.

Through all the clamour of conflicting claims, Jewish and Arab, it may seem vain to raise a feeble bleat. But we did conquer Palestine. The Turk was beaten by two great Commonwealth and Indian Armies, one moving up from Egypt, the other threatening from Mesopotamia, with a romantic flutter in the deserts in between. We gave Palestine to the League, and the League returned it to us, by mandate, to rule.

## CHAPTER XI.

### AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW.

THE agents of order, in the first instance, in Palestine are the Palestine police. At the beginning of 1936 this police force was composed of British, Arab, and Jewish personnel, the strength being just over three thousand all ranks, about nine hundred of whom were British and two thousand Arab. But the number of Arab police inspectors in the force was approximately three times the number of British inspectors, with the result that British constables, in some cases, were under the orders of Arabs.

There were six police districts in Palestine : three in the Northern District, two in the Southern, and one in the Jerusalem District. The police organisation was not flexible enough to make it possible to reinforce police in one district by police drawn from another, except to a very limited extent. The octopus tentacle

## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

of financial control seems to have insisted on having only just enough police in each district to compete with the maintenance of order in that particular district. The peculiarities of Palestine before 1936 demanded a central police reserve, and the lack of one in 1936 was a disadvantage.

Although the top of the police structure was British, it soon became very mixed lower down, and British personnel did not command throughout, wherever police were stationed. The Arab police functioned in Arab areas and the Jewish police in Jewish areas. As these two communities were in a perpetual state of latent or open conflict, there was always a tendency among their police representatives to suffer from a conflict of loyalties—loyalty to the government pulling against loyalty to racial interests. That peculiarity was, however, by no means confined to the police. It seemed to permeate all services in Palestine and even affected British officials, who tended to develop a passion for one side or the other, usually the Arab. In fact, anyone making a brief stay in Palestine would soon be wondering whether the British interests in the country had any supporters at all.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

The Palestine police was an armed force, its duties in that disturbed country being more akin to those of the old R.I.C. in Ireland than to the duties of a police force in a civilised country. As a result, there was always a certain vagueness as to where police duties ended and military duties began. Even in normal times the police had to deal with armed highwaymen and small armed gangs, so that part of their duties and training were military. This led some people to contend that there ought to be a gendarmerie wing in the force, or even a gendarmerie unit distinct from it. Others urged that the protection of roads against armed highwaymen and all operations against armed gangs should be carried out by British troops stationed in the country.

The police force in Palestine has had an unsettled history. It was not till 1926 that policy regarding its organisation became defined and the idea of a gendarmerie was discarded. The trouble with the gendarmerie had been that it was difficult to find enough for it to do in normal times. In fact, it sat down between two stools, in doubt whether it was a police force or a military one. When at last the authorities made up their minds what kind of



## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

police force to have, they made the mistake of weakening British control by having too many Palestinian inspectors. The Palestine police, in 1936 before the rebellion, did not fit the case, and it never seems to have succeeded in fitting, because, after every disturbance, there have been recommendations for correcting its organisation. The facts of the situation in Palestine demanded British control as deep into the force as possible, though naturally Palestinians were essential in the lower ranks to keep the British control in touch with the people. However, the desire to please once again pushed the facts aside.

Police work in Palestine, difficult enough in any case, was complicated by the problem of auxiliary police. The Jews had rights of self-protection. They were allowed to have a few shot-guns in each settlement, locked in local armouries, which might be opened and the arms issued to meet attack. The situation was, and indeed still is, like the Wild West in the days when the west was wild and Indians might come rushing out of the wilder wild at any moment. In Palestine the Arab plays the part of Indian still.

The Palestine police has to look after the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

auxiliaries, train them, and inspect the armouries. In the 1936 rebellion the civil power, with its passion for keeping an even balance between both factions, employed Arab auxiliary police. They were used to guard vulnerable points in Arab areas and to protect Arab orange groves and crops, in much the same way as Jews protected in Jewish areas. This was all very confusing, both for the police and for H.M. Forces, because the auxiliaries had a passion for shooting at something. If an Arab began, a Jew would probably reply ; then if the noise was loud enough, a British detachment might join in, thereby rousing more auxiliaries, and very soon ' sniping ' would be in full swing over half a district.

Arab auxiliaries were also inclined to be vague about their ammunition. At first, they had a habit of asking British soldiers for more, on the plea that they had used up all they had. Then an Arab who asked for more was searched, and found to be wearing concealed thirty rounds of good live ammunition. There was good reason to believe that Arab auxiliaries passed their ammunition on to the other side.

A few more impediments to policing deserve mention. There were no married quarters

## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

within the police stations, with the result that married Arab constables in particular had to live in the towns or villages at which they were quartered, all in among those who were active in the riot, rising, or rebellion. That was an impossible arrangement in the circumstances of the case, due again to financial stubbornness. It exposed the constables to intimidation and imposed a great strain on their loyalty.

In spite of all the experience of Ireland and of Palestine itself before 1936, there existed no arrangements whereby compensation could be awarded for malicious injuries to members of the police or armed forces wounded at duty, or to their dependants if they were killed. It may be contended, with some difficulty, that the normal pensions are good enough. There is, however, great advantage in making special and generous awards during the period of an insurrection amounting to sub-war. It is a practical way of supporting the forces of order and a practical way of punishing the other side, particularly if rebel funds are impounded and used for the purpose, or if grants which would benefit those in rebellion are diverted to cover compensation.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Another failure in administration has imposed a heavy burden on the Palestine police. Control of arms in Palestine has never been attempted, because it was considered too difficult to enforce. The argument has always been that, as fast as arms are seized, arms probably newer and better would pour in to replace them. Disarming Palestine has been compared by responsible civil officials to baling a very leaky boat. But the comparison is not a very good one, because the boat Palestine has no sides to it. No attempt ever has been made to control the frontiers of the country properly. In fact, Palestine was, before 1936, and still is, more like a raft sunk an inch or two beneath the surface.

It was illegal to have arms in Palestine without a licence, but nobody bothered much about that. At the beginning of 1936 there were probably about twelve thousand rifles hidden about the country. It was not illegal to carry arms in Transjordan, which marches with Palestine all along the Jordan valley. The river, which is the frontier southward as far as the Dead Sea, constitutes no obstacle, because it is fordable almost anywhere at most times of the year. The Dead Sea is an obstacle,

## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

being about nine miles wide, but there is an area to the south of it which lies quite open. The Jordan valley is very malarial, except in the winter months, a fact which made control along that line more difficult. But Transjordan was not a foreign country like Syria, it was part of the mandate. The French controlled their side of the Syrian frontier with Palestine, but the government of Palestine did next to nothing on its side.

As a result of this neglect, there was a good trade in contraband as well as in arms across the Palestinian frontiers. Even Jews were included in the contraband, being smuggled in by Arabs at a price. The Jews who felt impelled to come in that way were those who had not been able to get on the immigration quota or had failed to fulfil the conditions. Then there were the Bedouin, who habitually wander about, and were allowed to wander into Palestine. They were supposed to leave their arms at the nearest police post after entering the country, just as we leave umbrellas on entering a picture gallery.

These conditions made things very difficult for the police. On one occasion two alleged Bedouin were found wandering with their rifles

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

on the main road a few miles north of Jerusalem fully thirty miles inside Palestine. They said that they had been looking for a police post at which to leave their arms, but could not find one anywhere. The magistrate accepted that plea. On another occasion a man was caught in the act of wading across the Jordan with his rifle held up above his head. He did not know that the police were watching him on the Palestine side. In court a long argument developed as to whether the man was on the Palestine side of an imaginary line drawn down mid-stream—that is, whether he was in Palestine by inches or still in Transjordan by inches—when hailed by the Palestine police. Though the man quite clearly intended to step ashore in Palestine unobserved, the doubt about the country in which he was standing when summoned, and the fact that he declared that he was just looking for a cow, saved him from punishment.

The state of Palestine being what it was, better control of the inhabitants might have resulted by means of residence permits, like a driving licence in this country, but containing a description of the bearer and a reference to some person of moderate standing, in case it

## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

became necessary to make inquiries. That idea never seems to have found favour with the authorities, one possible objection to it being that the Jews might not like it, presumably in case the presence in Palestine of contraband Jews might be revealed. That argument illustrates the thickness of the crocodile skin and the strength of the voice speaking in Jerusalem. It would be a grand argument to apply to income tax authorities in this country, to stop the discovery of illegal immigration of funds into the household purse.

Even when given a fair chance of functioning properly, a police force has its limitations. It can arrest offenders, but it cannot punish them without authority. The efficient functioning of the authority which decrees punishment is the final test. There were Magistrates' Courts all over Palestine. Above them stood the District Courts, four in number, at Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, and Nablus, each with a British president and two Palestinian judges. Crimes punishable with death went before courts of Criminal Assize, which were constituted by adding to a District Court, the Chief Justice, or a British judge of the Supreme Court.

The functioning of the authority which decreed

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

punishment in Palestine can be judged by results. It never has functioned owing to the ruling passion for conciliation. After the rising in 1929, when at least 470 people were murdered or wounded apart from those killed and wounded in restoring order, only three death sentences were carried out, although twenty-nine death sentences were passed by the courts. That gave some indication of what might happen next time, though not even the most sanguine rebel could have expected that not one death sentence would be carried out after six months of rebellion, entailing much greater loss of life than any of the previous disorders.

Behind the Palestine police, to meet the case of serious internal disorder, stood H.M. Forces garrisoning Palestine. By a redistribution of commands between the Army and the Royal Air Force, Palestine had come under the latter, and the commander of the forces was an Air Vice-Marshal. But the High Commissioner, who was a Lieutenant-General on the active list, had extended powers as if he were commanding a fortress, and exercised command as Commander-in-Chief.

The garrison consisted of two squadrons and four sections of armoured cars of the Royal Air



## AGENTS OF ORDER AND LAW

Force, covering Palestine and Transjordan, and two battalions of the Army, both stationed in Palestine. There was also a local force, the Transjordan Frontier Force, an Arab unit partly mounted and partly mechanised, about one thousand strong, officered by British officers. This unit was mainly recruited and stationed in Transjordan, but was available for duty in the eastern part of Palestine.

The two infantry battalions were stationed, one in Jerusalem, with a company at Sarafand, near Jaffa and Tel Aviv, and the other at Haifa. The battalion in the south was in a position to deal with Jerusalem and Jaffa, and, if necessary, Hebron, all centres of trouble in the past. The battalion at Haifa could keep that seaport in order and detach companies to Nablus and Safad, old centres of disorder in the north. There was nothing in hand but the armoured cars to guard communications, and the situation was complicated by the lack of a through main road in the maritime plain between Jaffa and Haifa. This defect appears to have been due to fear that a through road might compete with the main line of the government owned Palestine railways. In consequence, the only through road from south to north ran from Jerusalem

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

through Nablus to Haifa, through very difficult hilly Arab country.

The nearest reinforcements in case of serious trouble were in Egypt, and must use either the desert road from Suez through Hebron, or the main line into Palestine through Gaza. After Egypt there was Malta, from which reinforcements might be sent, in which case they would probably land at Haifa. There was not much margin of safety in Palestine itself, taking all the circumstances into consideration. A policy of nipping trouble quickly in the bud seemed to be indicated.

## CHAPTER XII.

### REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936.

It is time now to examine the particular case of sub-war which distracted Palestine for six months from April to October 1936. It offers a better example of the foul disease than any of its predecessors, because it moved more quickly and its stages were more clearly marked. As a problem of rule under conditions of modern rebellion, it provides a great many lessons, which should be noted in case we find ourselves face to face with difficulties of the same type again within the British sphere of rule.

The general problem which troubled Palestine in the early days of 1936 was an old one within the British Empire. It was the problem of the gradual delegation of power by the ruler to the ruled on the way to self-government. The problem would not arise if Britain were imperialist. There would then be little question

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

of delegation, and certainly no idea of delegation to the extent of full self-government. A peculiar feature in Britain's experiment is the ungracious way in which the ruled receive from the ruler. Those who do not receive as quickly as they would like seem inclined to resort to force in order to accelerate the pace. The factor of correct timing by the ruler is a factor of great importance, but the timing must be done by Britain.

Whereas, in the case of the British Empire, Britain put herself where she is as ruler, in the case of Palestine, she was put there by the great majority of the nations of the world as the judge of when to delegate power. At the end of 1935 a step on the staircase of delegation was suggested. The proposal was to set up a legislative council in Palestine in place of direct rule by a High Commissioner. Parliament thought that Palestine was not ready for the step. The Jews objected because there were not yet, in their opinion, enough Jews in Palestine to safeguard their interests. The Arabs objected because the step was, in their opinion, much too short a step. That put the ruler in the position of making a decision and seeing that the decision was carried out.

## EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936

Between December 1935 and April 1936, when the rebellion broke out in Palestine, the proposal regarding a legislative council was under consideration, and the Jews, the Arabs, and the British Parliament were all thinking it over. There were also proposals regarding the control and limitation of the sale of Arab lands to Jews. It was not intended to stop Jewish immigration, which was to continue to be controlled in accordance with the economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals. These proposals were definitely of the nature of giving more power to the ruled, when giving appeared to be justified. It will be recalled that the shape of the government of Palestine, at the time when the proposal was made, was, and indeed still is, personal rule by the High Commissioner. Therefore the proposal was to take a step along the evolutionary path, a step away from direct personal rule.

The Arab parties were asked to consider the proposals and represent their views to the Government; that was in December 1935. Arab deliberations are usually very deliberate. They were still going on in February 1936. At that time an Arab 'strike' was in progress in Syria. In that part of the world political

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

upheavals are invariably called 'strikes.' The leading Arabs in Palestine then, in early February 1936, organised a strike in Palestine in sympathy with their fellow Arabs in Syria, thereby drawing a red herring across the path of evolution towards a legislative council.

The strike in Palestine was entirely political. It was directed against what was called the 'colonisation' systems of the French in Syria and the British in Palestine, both countries with Arab majorities ruled by foreigners. It looked as if the Arabs were straying into the field of international affairs, and were being led down the path in that direction by some interested party. At all events, intense agitation was carried out in the mosques against this so-called colonisation system and against British rule in Palestine, and the Arab Youth Party was brought into action to develop intimidation and help to keep the strike going.

Then the strike in Syria fizzled out, and the Arabs in Palestine were left without a red herring. However, they soon found a new one. At the end of March, debates in the House of Commons led the Arabs to say that they believed that there was little hope of support there, either for a legislative council, for restric-

tion of land sales to Jews, or for restriction of Jewish immigration. At once the whole hunt was off in full cry after the new red herring, the House of Commons, which was said to be controlled by the Jews. A fierce campaign was begun in the Arab Press as well as in the mosques in favour of resort to force. Force, it was urged, was a word which Britain understood. The only hope of the Palestinian Arabs now lay in direct action, for if things were allowed to continue as before, they must be overwhelmed in a few years by floods of Jews.

In the midst of these confusions the Arabs were politely reminded of the point at issue—the proposal to set up a legislative council. They were invited to send a delegation to London. They accepted, and more deliberations began, to decide who was to go. Then, out of a clearer sky, there fell the third, the lucky red herring. Riots broke out in the twin cities of controversy, Jaffa and Tel Aviv, between the 19th and 21st of April. The sending of a delegation to London was at once postponed. The Arab leaders became intensely active, and on the 25th of April created a new body, the Higher Arab Committee.

The Higher Arab Committee was set up

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

without reference to the government, to control and manage the strike of Arabs in Palestine, organised on the pretext of the riots in Jaffa and Tel Aviv. The president of this new Committee was the Mufti. On the 25th of April the Committee issued a declaration stating that the strike would continue till all the Arab demands were granted by the government. The demands were: stoppage of Jewish immigration; stoppage of sales of land to Jews; and the setting up of a representative national government in Palestine. So the Arab leaders rejected, in this tortuous manner, the proposal to set up a legislative council, and resorted to force to gain a representative national government, as the first step to Arab rule in Palestine. On the 25th of April, therefore, rebellion began.

The riots in Jaffa and Tel Aviv were serious enough. On the 17th of April the funeral procession of a murdered Jew in Tel Aviv got into trouble with the police, and rioting broke out, in which Arabs in the Jewish city of Tel Aviv were attacked. Then on the 19th of April, after a brief pause of apparent peace, the return match was played in the Arab city of Jaffa. Suddenly Arabs began rushing about the streets shouting out that their fellow country-



## EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936

men were being murdered by Jews in Tel Aviv. Before the Jews visiting Jaffa for the day could scuttle to safety they were having their throats cut and lying grinning and dead about the streets. Police rushed to restore order, and troops were moved to support them. By the time they had all finished the score was 16 Jews killed and 75 wounded, against 6 Arabs killed and 71 wounded. A person of normal sense would expect to find the responsible head of the Moslem religion in Palestine exercising all his great powers in the direction of moderation and calm after such an outburst of insanity; instead, he used the occasion to raise rebellion against the government by all the Arabs in Palestine.

Looking at the situation up to the 25th of April from the British side, the question of interest is the amount of warning of rebellion available to the government of Palestine. Those who know Palestine well say that it is seldom possible to have warning of riot. There appears to have been no warning of riot in Tel Aviv, but that riot was in itself a warning of riot in Jaffa. However, warning of riot is one thing, warning of rebellion is something very different. The past records and general tendencies of the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

various Arab parties in Palestine were known. Of these, the strongest was the Palestine Arab Party, presided over by Jemal Husseini, a cousin of the Mufti. The Palestine Arab Party aimed at independence for Palestine under Arab leadership, an aim which naturally included opposition to the British Mandate and to the Balfour Declaration. The Arab Reform Party was formerly a moderate party, ready to co-operate with the government, but it became involved in political manoeuvres over the election of the Mayor of Jerusalem, whereby its president became Mayor, and the party then allied itself with the Palestine Arab Party. The Youth Congress was another party which closely supported the Palestine Arab Party. It was designed to catch the youth of the country, and could safely be regarded as composed of highly inflammable material. The Palestine National Bloc and the Istiqlal Party had no great influence, but on the whole supported the extremists.

The party in opposition to the Mufti and the Palestine Arab Party was the National Defence Party, under the leadership of Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, the former Mayor of Jerusalem. Its general policy was more moderate than that

of the other parties, but it drew its chief inspiration from rivalry with the Palestine Arab Party and the Husseinis.

Assuming then that the offer of a legislative council was not made just to start strife among the Arab parties and bring out a regrouping more likely to co-operate, the government could expect the answer that its proposals did not go far enough. In fact, no proposal short of handing over the government of the country to the stronger group of Arab leaders would go far enough. That, however, in itself would not be enough to lead the government to expect rebellion, though the action of the Palestine Arab leaders in staging a strike in sympathy with the Arabs in Syria showed that they were inclined to direct action.

The attitude and past record of the Mufti were, of course, known to the government, which possibly knew also of the visits to Jerusalem of one Fauzi-ed-Din Kawukji, who quite recently has been making rather tactless disclosures in the Egyptian Press. Fauzi rebelled against the French in Syria in 1925, and has since lived in Baghdad. He has always been a very active Arab nationalist, devoted to the idea of a free and independent Arab State

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

covering both Syria and Palestine. According to his own signed statement, he was in Jerusalem in July 1934 and there again in April 1935 for the purpose of completing plans of rebellion in consultation with Arab leaders. The part which he was to play was to bring in arms and men from the east across the desert. The plotters had plans for rebellion in either Syria or in Palestine, and were prepared to put either plan into operation as opportunity offered. At first it seemed that Syria, early in 1936, presented the better target of the two, but unexpectedly Syria relapsed into slumber. Then in April 1936, just as unexpectedly, Palestine woke up. Fauzi then collected his arms and his men and did invade Palestine, where he became a national hero and the local Michael Collins.

Account must also be taken of the situation outside Palestine in the early months of 1936. The Italians were well committed to their assault on Abyssinia, and their relations with Britain verged on war. A British division from home was sitting in the western desert of Egypt over against Italian forces in Libya. The bulk of the British Navy was in the Mediterranean and a large part of it at the eastern

## EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936

end of that sea. The government in Britain and some of the people seemed to have realised what a prolonged policy of disarmament meant, in practice. The situation in early 1936 seemed to justify the opinion of a distinguished Japanese General that Britain, by being weak in 1914, opened the way to war. Anyhow, it is useful to know what those who are inclined to war like. Our weakness in 1935 had its indirect effect in Abyssinia, and our weakness in 1936 had its direct effect in Palestine. The Italians could hardly be expected to leave such material as the Arab leaders in Palestine lying idle when they were really angry with us. It must have been easy to tell them that if they did not act, they would never get another opportunity so favourable to their cause.

In general, April 1936 was a likely time for trouble to begin in Palestine. The period from October to the end of March is never favourable for rebellious activities, because everybody is busy picking oranges or ploughing or sowing. The real grievance of the Arab leaders, to judge from their political aims, seemed to be directed against the British for having a mandate over Palestine at all. Their grievance regarding Jewish immigration only amounted

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

to a currant or two in the cake they wished to swallow. The Jaffa riots they used as a pretext to rouse the people. Without the Arab leaders there would have been no spontaneous rising. In fact, the response was not spontaneous at all, and the Arab people took a good deal of rousing.

It was not till eight days after the end of the Jaffa riots and four days after the Higher Arab Committee had announced its self-appointed existence and its demands on the government—namely, the 29th of April—that disorder became spread over all the country. On that day a convoy of cars escorted by police was stopped near Jenin by Arabs and forced to go back to Nablus for military aid, after losing one car which was set on fire. At Nazareth a crowd of about two thousand Arabs collected, and could not be dispersed till after the police had opened fire. At Nablus, Jaffa, and Haifa police patrols were fired at, and there were cases of arson. At Acre some railway stores were set on fire. At Tulkarm another crowd of about two thousand had to be forcibly dispersed by the police. At Beisan a police patrol was fired at, and in Jerusalem there were cases of arson, and a Jew was stabbed. In addition to these

## EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936

activities, several attacks were made on Jewish colonies.

That was the position at the end of April. All the Arab shops were shut, Arab buses and taxis were laid up, the Arab lightermen in Jaffa were on strike, the Arab leaders were agitating and urging ; but for some reason Arab government servants, including the railwaymen, who in Palestine are government employees, remained at duty.

During May the Arab leaders took effective steps to spread the revolt more thoroughly throughout the country. Their object was to ensure that resistance to government should not be confined to centres such as Jerusalem, Nablus, or Jaffa, where the more educated, politically minded Arabs were gathered as residents. Had they allowed that to happen, there might have developed a cleavage between town and country which would have left the government free to concentrate force in the centres, where living conditions were at their best for the police and troops and where communications were good. The object was to ensure that the rebellion was a Palestinian Arab rebellion and not just vigorous resistance to government by town-dwelling effendis, shop-

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

keepers, bus and taxi drivers, and municipal employees.

Therefore, early in May, the Higher Arab Committee, the Mufti in the van, toured the country, reorganising and gingering up the National Committees in the outlying districts, with the object of decentralising command and ensuring that each Committee should have its zone of activity and should be active in it. At the same time, orders were issued by the Higher Arab Committee that non-payment of taxes and civil disobedience were to begin from the 15th of May. These movements were carried out under the nose of the government, which must have known what was going on.

As a result of these activities, there was a noticeable tendency for rebel activity to spread from the towns into the country districts during May. There, the police were much more scattered and stationed in weaker detachments, while troops were not as yet present at all. It became necessary for roads to be patrolled by police or soldiers, and movement of civilian traffic on them had to be organised and controlled by means of a system of convoys. At the same time, acts of sabotage and attacks on the railways began, and they too had to be



## EXTREME MODERATION, APRIL-MAY 1936

patrolled, in an attempt to prevent derailments of trains.

Activity in the towns was not allowed to die down, however. There was considerable revolver work in Jerusalem. In Jaffa and in Haifa large crowds assembled in defiance of the police, and fire had to be opened to disperse them. In Nablus barricades were erected, and a band of armed Arabs occupied the hills overlooking the town, which lies deep in a narrow valley. From points of vantage and safe behind good cover, they amused themselves by firing at the old Turkish barracks and the military camp down below, both of which lay clear of their friends.

At Jaffa the Arab lightermen continued to strike, and it was not till the 15th of May that steps were taken under the protection of a destroyer to discharge cargo at Tel Aviv, the Jewish member of the twin cities. Later, another ship coming to discharge at Tel Aviv was greeted by Arabs in launches from Jaffa, who suddenly took to throwing bombs at it, a curious form of attack on a ship. Towards the end of May rebel activity had spread into the southern area around Hebron, Beersheba, and Gaza, where it took the form of attacks on

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

communications by means of road blocks and ambushes.

As may be imagined, the strain on the police and on H.M. Forces during these first six weeks of rebellion was very great. When trouble began the Air Officer Commanding had available only two infantry battalions, in addition to the squadrons and armoured cars of the Royal Air Force. The armoured cars were invaluable for road patrols and convoy protection, but duties in aid of the civil power demand infantry, and not much infantry was available. Probably not more than a thousand soldiers were available for effective duty over the whole country, after allowing for guards and such domestic details as cooking food. However, on the 11th of May, one battalion of reinforcements arrived, and on the 22nd another, while on the same date naval detachments were landed to help in running and maintaining traffic on the main line of railway. Thus, by the end of the third week in May, a month after the outbreak of organised rebellion, the garrison in Palestine had been doubled.

The events of that first month of rebellion in Palestine, from the point of view of a study of sub-war, were of primary importance. Look-

ing at the position from the other side, some curious features stand out. The leading political Arabs did not summarily reject the proposal to set up a legislative council. They seemed to toy with the idea till a section of them faced the others, probably the majority, with direct action against government and the alternative of supporting that action or taking the consequences.

There had been, without doubt, a great deal of talk of rebellion and a great deal of plotting, with the usual effect of both on the minds of those concerned. But the staff work does not seem to have kept pace with the talk. The organisations required to conduct rebellion, the Higher Arab Committee and the various District Committees, were not set up before, but after action had been taken. Fauzi and the foreign Arabs were even less ready for action. They were talking and plotting in April, but it took them till August to convert promise into performance. The way the rebellion began, or was allowed to begin, gives rise to three questions: how many of the million Arabs in Palestine had a genuine grievance against government, how much truth was there in the idea that the rebellion was a

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

spontaneous national outburst, why was there such a marked pause between the Jaffa riots and the rebellion proper ?

Turning to our side, and the point of view of the ruler, there was, of course, warning of trouble, the source of which was known. The Jaffa riots could be regarded as a cold in the head and not malignant malaria, but precautions were necessary and were taken by the police and military authorities. What was incomprehensible was that a few Arab leaders were allowed with impunity to proclaim a political strike and present an ultimatum to the government at a time of tension. Then, on the top of that, the new Higher Arab Committee, set up by self-appointed leaders in defiance of government, was allowed by the ruler to tour the country to organise the strike and make it effective. The Report of the Royal Commission, on page 178, states : " At an early stage in its course the Mufti and the Members of the Committee were allowed to make a tour throughout Palestine. We were informed that one district had been fairly quiet until the Mufti was given this permission and held conferences at which neither police nor officials were allowed to be present. From

the date of the tour, the strike had spread and stiffened."

The district referred to was, without doubt, the Northern District, more than half the country, covering the less accessible parts and the parts which it was most important to keep quiet. Rule of that kind is a menace to peace and the British Empire. It is one thing to hope that a riot will not degenerate into rebellion, it is another to make sure that it does not, and yet another to make sure that it does. The delay in obtaining reinforcements, the restrictions placed on the action of troops, from the outset, and the latitude allowed to the other side to obstruct their movement, become of secondary importance, in view of the freedom allowed to rebel leaders. Troops were not allowed to fire when obstructed by road blocks and threatening crowds, in order to make an early example. In consequence, obstruction became a habit and led to dispersal of force by the civil power, on the ground that because movement took so long, detachments must be placed in or very near places which might give trouble.

There is little doubt that, had there been a system of rule, based on previous knowledge

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

of sub-war, and had that system been applied promptly, in opposition to rebellion under arms, the position in Palestine and in the Middle East to-day would be different. There would not now be an admission of failure to rule Palestine by Britain, nor would there be a proposal to cut the country in two, nor would there be interference with British rule by foreign Arab States. Instead, there would be in Palestine, gradual evolution under strict British control, in place of a collision of conflicting forces left free to balance themselves by violence.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936.

THERE was no mystery whatever about the policy of the Arab leaders during the first month of the rebellion. They had called on the Arab people of Palestine to band themselves together to resist government. They had openly declared that they would continue to resist the government till a representative national government was set up in place of the British dictatorship. Their other demands about Jewish immigration and the sale of land to Jews were incidental, because it was quite obvious that a representative national government, with Arabs in a two to one majority over Jews, would soon put an end to both immigration and sales of land, if it felt inclined.

There was no mystery about the identity of those who were leading the resistance to government. The leaders who set the pace

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

and dictated the policy were the leading members of the dominant Arab party. They had not been elected by a free vote, but no system existed whereby they could be elected to represent the Arabs of Palestine. They were not men of a class which had ever bothered much in the past about the welfare of the people. They were men of a ruling class, some of whom had held high office in the days of the Turkish Empire, office not limited to Palestine, some had been governors of provinces, and some had held very high positions in Constantinople. Now, with the subdivision of a corner of the old Turkish Empire into the distinct mandates of Syria and Palestine, these leaders found themselves restricted into one small pen in a corner of the field of ambition, the whole of which had been open to them only twenty years before. Their grievance was, to a great extent, a personal one. They committed nothing more than a mild misdemeanour in constituting themselves leaders, in comparison with the crime of violating the peace by resort to force.

There was no mystery about the method of leadership. The resistance which the leaders organised could hardly be described as just passive resistance to government. The shutting



of Arab shops, the boycott of Jews, and the strike of the lightermen in Jaffa were not very serious matters, though as strikes they suffered from the objection that they were political and not industrial. But attacks on communications, both road and rail, shooting at police, and sniping of military posts, were acts of rebellion.

The mystery, which had deepened considerably by the end of May, was the attitude of the government of Palestine towards its duty to maintain order. It may have considered that it would have been useless just to stand in the middle of the road, with arms outstretched, in order to stop a runaway horse. Far better to run beside it, catch hold of something at the first opportunity, and gently bring the snorting beast to a halt. If that describes the policy of the government in the opening phase, its performance looked like that of a figure in a dressing-gown and bedroom slippers pathetically padding along in the dusty wake of the Higher Arab Committee. It may have been that the government had orders to deal with the situation without drawing more troops out of England, there being already one division on the western frontier of Egypt. If that was the case, the question still remains whether it would not have been

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

better to make fuller use of the forces available by more vigorous and more prompt action.

It is possible that the government had not had time in four weeks to decide that the strike was really a rebellion under the control of a directing authority. It is possible that it regarded the disorders as just a series of disconnected outbreaks, lacking central direction or national impulse, and so liable soon to peter out. Perhaps it considered that, in any case, a skilful use of political pressure would suffice to restore order and re-establish British authority. Its action seemed to be consistent with that idea, for it took very little additional power to itself by ordinance, except to increase the penalty for illegal use of arms and to order those who had arms to keep them in a safe place. It employed the soldiers as police, not to use their rifles as rifles, but as batons, not to act but to threaten, not to hit but to make faces. The 'paper tiger' policy adopted in China and Shanghai in 1927 was being repeated in Palestine. By the end of May the policy of the Government was a bewildering mystery to most of those who had to deal practically with disorder.

During June the forces of the government made no headway against those in rebellion,

## EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936

in spite of the fact that the strength of the garrison was again doubled before the end of the month. By that time it had increased to four times the original garrison. Instead of one battalion in the north, at Haifa, and one in the south at Jerusalem, there was by then a brigade in each of these two areas, and the bulk of the Transjordan Frontier Force was in the north-eastern part of the country patrolling the areas near the frontier. In addition, the Royal Air Force part of the garrison had been increased, and the Royal Navy had a ship at Haifa from which naval detachments had been landed for duty ashore.

It was not till near the end of May that a measure of decentralisation of control by the civil power in Jerusalem was authorised. Local heads of the civil, police, and military parts of rule were then allowed to meet and concert measures for the local security of public order.

This decentralisation of control, which was always very much subject to overrule from Jerusalem, was sound up to a point. It enabled reaction to the misdeeds of the other side to be put into effect more quickly. But it suffered from the defect that it was only reaction to action by the other side, and being purely

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

defensive, it left the initiative to the rebels. There was no plan for restoring order ; there were only measures for checking or stopping the spread of disorder. As a result, decentralisation of control merely tended to dissipate energy without producing any marked result. Without a plan, there was no means of telling at the end of a fortnight whether any progress had been made towards objective A, B, or C, because there were no defined objectives.

For example, objective A might have been to establish a strangle-hold on the rebel leaders, objective B to gain control of arms, and objective C to inflict deterrent penalties for any act of rebellion or act calculated to assist rebellion. Given a plan, it would have been possible to allot force to duties and make a clear distinction between strength used passively on guards, escorts, convoys, and road or railway patrols, and strength used objectively towards the attainment of a part of the general plan. That would tend to prevent too much strength from being used up on the passive side of the task, and, in turn, tend to make it less necessary to use strength passively, as progress towards the objective side developed.

It has to be remembered that the Air Officer

Commanding was not responsible for plans, which were entirely in the hands of the civil power. He was only the military adviser and not even the supreme military commander in Palestine. He had not always a free hand regarding the method of executing a military plan of action approved in principle by the civil power. The civil power kept to itself, not only the right of saying what was to be done, but also the right of saying how it was to be done. It may seem right in principle that the civil power should control in foul weather as well as in fair, but it is not right that the body responsible for policy and co-ordination of the four parts of rule, civil, police, military, and legal, should direct the detailed working of any one of the parts. The arrangement whereby the head of the civil part was also head of the military part of rule in Palestine was unsound. Tell a man what you want done, but leave him a free hand to do it, is a good maxim.

The first serious break-down in co-operation between the various parts of rule took place in June in the form of a clash between the civil and legal parts. It was not till the 12th of June that the civil power issued emergency regulations. In these regulations it ordered

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

increased penalties for the illegal use of arms against the forces of order, for the illegal possession of arms, for acts done against public order, such as intimidation, and for acts calculated to assist those opposed to public order, such as signalling a warning of the approach of troops to an armed band. At the same time, it took power to impose restrictions on individuals, inflict collective punishments, control communications and the Press, restrict movement, take over or destroy property, and intern individuals without trial. At once these regulations were challenged in the courts, and a ridiculous situation developed in which the executive government and judicature engaged in battle. In fact, a body of officials said that it had the right to say "No" to things which the executive government said it must do, if it was to maintain public order and go on governing. Something of the same kind has arisen of late in the United States, but not in the middle of a rebellion.

The dispute hampered the government in the restoration of order, but the government was not free from blame. The rebellion began on the 25th of April, and the government had taken till the 12th of June to produce its emer-

gency regulations to deal with the situation. In six weeks it should have been possible to ensure that friction did not arise between those who had to govern and those who had to punish resistance to government. Steps have since been taken to prevent a recurrence of the dispute, but not till March 1937 by means of an Order in Council. To take steps five months after the end of a rebellion, which lasted for six months, does not reveal evidence of much skill on the part of the management in dealing with the problems of sub-war. The Colonial Office, the government of Palestine, and their legal advisers ought to have known what to do in April 1936, instead of waiting to be taught by a rebellion to do what had been then necessary, in March 1937.

The next place in which a crack developed in the machinery of rule was in the civil part itself, and also in June. A concerted move was made by the senior Arab officials, including even judges, to advise the government. Feeling it to be their duty as Arabs of standing and as believers in co-operation between Arabs and British, they presented a memorandum to the government. The appeal was most respectfully worded, but amounted to nothing more than

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

a suggestion that the government should see the Arab point of view, and act on what it saw, by stopping Jewish immigration pending negotiations.

The example of the senior officials was later to be followed by the junior officials. When government servants, as a body, take to memorialising the government on questions of policy, the situation may be regarded as serious, particularly during a rebellion. Nevertheless, the appeal was accepted, and passed on its way, through the usual channels, to the Colonial Office.

In addition to that crack there was another flaw in the same part of the machine. The Higher Arab Committee had organised not only a strike, but also a fund for its financial support, which might mean anything from the purchase of arms to the payment of some form of dole to those impoverished through adherence to the cause. The contribution of money to this fund was regarded as the duty of all sound Arabs in Palestine, who were reminded of that duty, when necessary, by means amounting to intimidation. Money was also contributed from all manner of places outside Palestine. Arab government servants were not left out in the



## EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936

cold. An arrangement was made whereby they contributed a part of their salaries, said to be as much as ten per cent. The government, however, never proclaimed the Higher Arab Committee, and never made the collection of money for the strike illegal, so a crack or two was only to be expected.

During June a crack also began to develop in the police force, the bulk of which was Arab. The force had, by then, ceased to be able to function in the normal way. It required two or three men to do what had been the task of one, and, in general, the duties of the force had become military duties under arms. The crack only affected a part of the Arab section of the force, and, at first, only took the form of loss of keenness, though later it developed further. The Arab police, in the circumstances, had no easy part to play. Their lot was not improved by the failure of the government to provide quarters in police stations for married men, who, consequently, had either to become temporarily single, or live in the midst of those who were actively opposing them and their employers.

H.M. Forces remained the only sound part of the whole machine. They luckily do not crack, though they do function better if they

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

can see some point in the performance of abnormal duties and see some progress towards a result.

The progress of the other side during June was more noticeable than that of the government. The leaders remained free to carry on their control of the strike. The government had, quite early, imposed some restriction on the activities of some extremists by making them live in a place appointed and there report to the police. That was not found to have much effect, so an internment camp was opened near the Egyptian frontier. The inmates of this camp were treated as guests of the government and allowed wireless, typewriters, and gramophones, but were not brought to trial for any offence. Later, the camp was moved to Sarafand, near Lydda, when the stock of internees increased. There they lived in openly derisive contempt of the government till the rebellion ended, when they were let loose to spread infection. The government was most particular about their welfare. They were internees and not prisoners. Internment is not a very satisfactory arrangement, but seems necessary until the law dealing with minor acts of insurrection is strengthened. No doubt these people were just as well

## EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936

under guard, but unfortunately they were not the leaders of the rebellion.

During June the organisation of the other side improved, and there was ample evidence that they were becoming better armed and better led in action. As proof of their increasing confidence, they took to staging ambushes in daylight. At first, they had just assembled in crowds and put blocks across the roads. That had some effect. One battalion of reinforcements took seven hours to move from Tulkarm to Nablus by lorry, over a distance which normally would be covered in less than one. The policy of obstruction led to dispersal of force, because the civil power felt that it must locate troops in or near places where trouble might arise, in order to reduce time in reaching them. But, long before June, things had passed from the stage of mere obstruction to the stage of open rebellion under arms.

To give only a few examples of main events during the first week of the month, thirty-two casualties were inflicted by rebel bomb-throwing in Jerusalem and Haifa; a bridge was blown up on the main line of railway between Haifa and Lydda; and an armed band attempted

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

to stop protected traffic on the main road from Jerusalem to Jaffa, thereby bringing on an action which lasted for two hours with a company of infantry, with police and armoured cars co-operating. In the second week of the month, attacks on the main railway line increased. Sixteen casualties, mostly Jewish, were caused by the throwing of a bomb into a railway carriage. Two days later two trains were derailed and considerable damage done to the line by sabotage. On one day during the week, troops had to open fire on sixteen distinct occasions. In the third week attacks on the railway continued and a goods train was derailed and wrecked, and soon after a patrol engine and truck were derailed near Tulkarm. Within a day or two of these attacks a strong party of armed Arabs attacked a military patrol moving on the line by trolley. Under heavy covering fire they tried to hem the trolley in between two blocks of boulders thrown on the line, but before they could complete the block behind the trolley it managed to back out, three soldiers being wounded. On the next day another patrol trolley ran over some form of mine, probably a shell from an old war dump, and was blown off the line.

## EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936

In the last week of the month there took place the first engagement which might be described as a battle. An escorted convoy of assorted cars was moving on its normal run from Jerusalem to Nablus and Tulkarm, and thence back by Jaffa. Anyone could join these convoys. They started at a given place and time. Instructions were then issued to the drivers as to what they were to do if attacked. The armoured cars and military trucks with their load of infantry then stationed themselves suitably, and the procession started. Anyone wishing to go on to Haifa would find another convoy and escort at the road junction half-way between Nablus and Jenin. There, after a good deal of shunting and reshuffling to suit destinations, the various columns would proceed.

On this occasion a large party of armed Arabs opened fire on the convoy from ambush some miles east of Tulkarm, at a place where the road twists and turns in a narrow valley among hills. The escort promptly engaged the enemy and pushed the assorted vehicles on to Tulkarm to get them out of the way. At the same time it signalled for reinforcements. Infantry in trucks at once set out from both Nablus and Tulkarm, while aircraft flew to the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

scene of action. The main body of the enemy was driven into the hills to the north, pursued and shot up by low-flying aircraft. The Arabs suffered a score or more casualties, but three aircraft were hit, and had to land at Tulkarm, and one soldier was killed and three wounded. The action lasted from eleven-thirty in the morning till seven o'clock.

And so the strike progressed into July and the third month of its run. The cracks in the machinery of rule were to become worse, and there were to be plenty more of these battles. It is not unfair to the government of Palestine, though beset by difficulties and in a difficult situation, to wonder whether most of the difficulties would not have faded into the air had it but acted more quickly and more vigorously against those who had risen to destroy a record peace for Palestine.

The failures of the first month were carried on throughout the second. No resolute action was taken against the rebel leaders, but restrictions continued to be imposed on the police and troops. In fact, the policy of the government of Palestine seemed to be one of leaning against rebellion, and, when the leaning proved to be no deterrent, of calling for more reinforce-

## EXTREME MODERATION, JUNE 1936

ments in order to lean more heavily. The civil power was just balancing the forces of order and the forces of rebellion. That, unfortunately, is not the way to deal with sub-war. It is too dangerous.

It is not yet realised how dangerous were the arrangements of rule in Palestine. The civil power applied emergency rule step by step in the most leisurely fashion, and never moved far enough at a bound to make it effective. It seemed to think that the Arabs were not really trying very hard. However, it was not lack of will as much as lack of ability which prevented the other side from making better use of its opportunities. Thanks to the liberty of action allowed to them in the first month, the rebels could have put the civil power out of action in the second, during June. It is hardly advisable to explain how, in case they may be given an opportunity to try again. But June was a critical month for the ruler.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, JULY 1936.

IN July the mystery regarding British policy in Palestine was solved. At any rate the policy was diagnosed, though the reasons for it remained in doubt. The cryptic remarks of people, who probably knew what was the governing policy, provided clues to a solution of the mystery. Besides these clues, there was the experience of two months of rebellion, providing a basis on which to infer intention from the facts of the case. It still remained uncertain, however, whether the policy was evolved by the government of Palestine, the Colonial Office, or the British Cabinet.

One clue, with little comfort in it, lay in the oft-repeated reminder of some theorists that the Arabs were not really shooting at the troops, but only at the government's policy. The reminder raised suspicion that it might



have an Arab origin, and the further suspicion that a plea so fatuous could only be repeated by Arab sympathisers. There was also something in it of hope that the troops would not take to thinking, as Arabs think when Arabs are shot, in terms of a blood-feud. The reminder also raised the old question, what was the government's policy? If Arabs could shoot at it, perhaps theorists could explain it.

Theorists never did explain the government's policy. They did, however, explain that it would be utterly wrong to adopt stern measures against the Arabs and quell the rebellion by force, and then find, when some commission of inquiry examined the root causes of the rebellion, that the Arabs had had a grievance when they rebelled. That argument seemed to have quite a number of flaws in it. It suggested that the odds were on a verdict in favour of the Arabs. It ignored the distinction between ways and means of redressing a grievance and ways and means of stopping a deliberate resort to force. It tied these two distinct considerations into one insoluble knot. If that argument explains British policy, it explains also its weakness. Worst of all, it suggested that resort to force was quite justifiable in certain

circumstances. Should those who control the forces of order take to thinking, even a little, that rebellion is justified, the control is liable to puzzle those who are controlled. The controlled then do become just dogs in a dog-fight, but dogs on a chain, charged with the task of keeping the other man's dog away from their master's legs, till it tires of its attack.

Another theory which may have governed policy was that it would not do to quell the rebellion by force, because that would leave the Arab part of the population cowed and sullen, with the seeds of future rebellion deeply planted in their bruised and battered souls. Therefore, the correct way to meet rebellion was by a policy of patience and extreme moderation. The task of the troops might be rendered more difficult during the pursuit of that policy. Reinforcement might become necessary, but increased numerical strength should not be an excuse for a more drastic use of force. The policy of extreme moderation should continue.

That theory hardly stands the test of Ireland. There, we did not quell rebellion in 1921 by force. We used force with as much moderation as the excesses of the other side allowed. We aimed at a settlement out of court, away from the

grim judgment of superior force. We got a settlement out of court. But, to judge from the events of 1937, that exercise of moderation seems to have been a failure. Perhaps more time is required before success or failure can be established. Perhaps our policy aims at a detachment comparable to that exercised by archæologists examining the ideographic records of rebellion on relics dug up from the sands of Egypt.

Anyhow, intention is difficult to prove. Short of a free confession, it can only be inferred from the facts of the case. On the basis of the facts it appeared that the policy of the government was to meet rebellion by means of extreme moderation, no matter how many troops might be required in the process.

The exact reason for that policy, however, remained obscure. It might have been adopted in the expectation that a commission of inquiry would find that the Arabs had been badly treated. At all events, in July, it was announced that a Royal Commission would investigate the root causes of unrest in Palestine, but would not leave England to begin its labours on the troubled spot till disorder ended. The announcement of the setting up of a Royal

Commission did not seem to please either the Jews or the Arabs. The Jews felt sure that the result would be restriction of Jewish immigration. They were optimists; restrictions were imposed twice before the Commission had completed its report. The half-yearly immigration quota of April 1936 had been 4500. In November 1936 it sank to 1800, and in May 1937 to 770.

The Arabs took the line that they had been let down by commissions of inquiry before. They contended that no matter how excellent and distinguished the individuals who composed it, and no matter how fair and impartial its finding, the decision lay, not with the commission, but with the Cabinet and Parliament in London. And both these bodies, according to the Arabs, were under the influence of the Jews. So, in spite of the fact that aircraft were sent up to drop brief life histories of the members of the Royal Commission over the Arab parts of Palestine, the rebellion went on and the Commission stayed at home.

On the other hand, the policy was perhaps adopted not out of fear of a finding that the Arab had been injured already, but out of a desire to avoid bruising his soul, combined

perhaps with a hope that he would be grateful afterwards. In July the Mufti was being protected from bruises in Parliament, where questions had been raised regarding his activities. The government spokesman, in defending him, contended that it was absurd to regard him as a civil servant ; that it was a point which made trouble, not only among the Arabs, but among the whole Moslem world, when a religious leader was misrepresented as being in a position from which the government could turn him out because he freely expressed his views on political matters.

That defence might do for the Mufti in his capacity as head of the Supreme Moslem Council, in which capacity he received half his salary from the government and half from the religious endowments, but it seemed rather inadequate for the Mufti as president of the Higher Arab Committee, the body set up on the initiative of himself and his party to manage the strike. Even in his capacity as head of the Supreme Moslem Council the defence was vulnerable. That Council is responsible for the control of the mosques. It is said that the preaching of politics in mosques is not in accordance with the teaching of the Koran. Preaching politics

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

in mosques, temples, or churches in a way calculated to incite the people to rise against the established government of the country is wrong. History bears witness to the inevitable consequence, a clash between Church and State. No man can serve two hostile masters, and no people can live in peace under two competing rulers. Yet, in that same July, when the Mufti was being defended in the House of Commons, incitement of an unusual kind was taking place in the mosques of Palestine. Men assembled to perform their religious duties were harangued from the steps of the pulpit and urged to join the ranks of the religious warriors in the fight against the forces of the government.

The anxiety of those responsible for governing Palestine to gloss things over was bewildering, and is still bewildering. They seemed to be particularly anxious that the Mufti should make a public announcement that he was opposed to violence and the use of arms. He never did make any public announcement of the kind, and it is difficult to see how or why he should, in the circumstances.

The policy of extreme moderation, which was in practice a policy of glossing things over, naturally entailed the imposition of restrictions

on the action of both police and troops. At first, the police had to do most of the searching of villages for arms. These arms were usually well hidden at some distance from the houses. On one occasion, a group of women were seen seated on a rug near a village, apparently refreshing themselves during a pause in their agricultural labours. Someone had the bright idea of looking under the rug. The ladies at first failed to understand, and then combined protest with loud lamentation when they saw that bluff was useless. Under the rug the earth had been newly dug. The earth was dug up again, and in a narrow trench was found a little arsenal of arms and ammunition.

The Arabs of course protested against these searches, which as a rule produced very little result. The lodging of protests is part of the drill of sub-war. Restrictions were then placed on the action of the police. But, by then, the Arab section of the police, with notable exceptions, had cracked, and the effective strength of the police was so reduced that searches were carried out by troops. The Arabs protested more vigorously, and complaints poured in. The women-folk were encouraged to sit stubbornly in resistance to search. In addition to that old

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

trick, traps were laid for the unwary searcher. On one occasion, troops were accused of tearing up a Koran in a small village mosque. What actually happened was that the officer in command examined the mosque himself, knowing how tricky the business was and that the word of an Arab would always be believed in preference to that of a British soldier. Unfortunately, the officer had everyone cleared out of the mosque and then looked over it alone. A minute or two after he came out an Arab came rushing forth, frantic with excitement, yelling the news of his awful discovery. There was a rush for the mosque, and when the officer with one or two men managed to force their way in, there, strewn about the floor, were torn pages of the sacred book. Every form of accusation was made against the troops. Restrictions were then placed by the civil authorities on their action, and soon searches for arms dropped more and more out of the programme.

During July actions and battles increased in number and casualties mounted up on both sides. As might be expected, the wrong people sometimes got shot. Accidents of that kind are part of any rebellion run on sub-war lines,



when the armed forces of the other side try to resemble peaceful inhabitants as much as possible. These incidents of course gave rise to more complaints. As a result of these complaints, more restrictions were placed on the action of the troops in a laudable attempt to avoid the infliction of casualties on innocent persons.

Unfortunately, the nature of sub-war makes it impossible to prevent accidents, especially when troops are widely dispersed. Junior corporals frequently have to command guards, and sentries have to keep their weapons loaded. The difficulty in avoiding mistakes arises from the fact that those active in rebellion do not wear distinctive uniform, but hide their weapons under civilian clothes, with the intention of confusing those whom they attack. The solution of the difficulty seems to lie along the lines of making junior N.C.O.'s face their increased responsibilities in a way which will not curb their initiative.

Meanwhile, what of the other side? During July the Arabs celebrated the hundredth day of the strike. That gave them an opportunity to take stock of the position. Most of the rank and file, who had suffered loss through the closing of shops and the general upheaval in the country, seemed to come to the conclusion that

it would be better to carry on to some decision, rather than waste the losses incurred already by yielding to compromise. The majority were rather proud and not a little surprised that they had been able to carry on for so long and fight the Mandatory Power so successfully. The contrast with the rising of 1929 was most marked. The Mandatory Power seemed to be much weaker and less resolute and it was now the main enemy—the Jews had sunk to second place.

The leaders of the revolt were, no doubt, surprised at the latitude allowed them, and as surprised as their followers at the success of their resistance to government. By the hundredth day of the strike the Mufti and the Palestine Arab Party were still dominant. They had consolidated their grip on the country through the machinery of the Higher Arab Committee and the District Committees working under it. The strike part of the programme—for example, the closing of shops—had perhaps been a mistake, rather like cutting off noses to spite faces. But, even if it was imposing some strain on the followers, they were still solid enough and the state of the funds robust enough to provide compensation where necessary.

The Arab parties in opposition were weak

and lacked a programme, whereas the programme of the leaders in control was quite clear. They were out for a representative national government, and that meant Arab domination. The political pressure exerted by the government of Palestine was not difficult to parry, because resistance to it seemed always to make those who exerted it weaken and reduce their pressure, as if they were afraid that they might make stiffer the attitude of the Arab leaders.

Perhaps the public announcement by the leaders that the strike would continue till all their demands on the government were conceded, tended to leave them little room for political manoeuvre, but already something had been gained, the setting up of a Royal Commission. That, whatever might have to be said about it in public, was likely to bring them closer to the first objective, the representative national government. The pressure exerted by the government on the leaders to stop the disorders and so let the Royal Commission come to Palestine could be used against the government in the form of a request to stop Jewish immigration first, thereby opening the way to the second objective. The third objective, the stoppage of sales of land to Jews, they could

reach themselves, by the use of persuasion on their own people.

Whether all the leaders desired it or not, resistance to government by obstruction had progressed to resistance by armed force. The armed bands were keeping the troops busy, though they were suffering rather severely. But some of the leaders were certainly believers in the use of armed force. Their arrangements, however, had not worked out too well. It was probably a mistake to have two plans, one for Syria and another for Palestine. The man who chases two hares catches neither, according to an old Chinese proverb. The sudden switch from the Syrian hare to the Palestinian hare had caused delay. It had taken the best part of a month of strike action to reveal the fact that Palestine was ripe for the Palestine plan. It took the best part of another month to organise external armed assistance, and the best part of a third to mobilise it and move it to Palestine. That was very slow, and the leaders were lucky to be still leading on the hundredth day.

It is not quite clear when Fauzi and his armed bands did invade Palestine. They were certainly there in the first part of August,

and may have arrived by the end of July. The connection between the Arab leaders in Palestine and the armed bands raised in Palestine, as well as those brought in from abroad, seems to be established. The civil authorities persisted in maintaining that there was no connection, and persisted in trying to squeeze a public pronouncement against the use of armed force out of the Mufti to support their charitable theory. With that theory fixed in their minds, they refused to act vigorously against the Arab leaders. Why that theory was fixed in their minds remains a mystery, one of many surrounding the exercise of British rule in Palestine.

The evidence hardly supports the civil authorities. In the first place, the Arab leaders in Palestine were not thinking in terms of Palestine alone. They had called a strike in Palestine early in 1936, before the rebellion began, to help their Arab brethren in Syria. If they had the mind to do that, they had the mind to accept help from Syria and Iraq. A mere strike in either of these countries would not help Palestine much ; something more practical would be required. There had been conversations about mutual armed assistance, and there were

arms and armed bands in Palestine, so the conversations were not just airy talks. Fauzi did collect his men from Syria, the Lebanon, Transjordan, and Iraq, and did bring them, well armed, into Palestine.

The casualty list bore witness to the state of poor Palestine in July 1936. By the end of the first week of the month four members of H.M. Forces had been killed and twenty-five wounded. A month later the figures had risen to ten killed and sixty-three wounded. By the end of the first week of July troops had had to open fire on more than three hundred occasions—that is, on an average, four times a day since the rebellion began on the 25th of April. During July actions, large and small, took place almost daily, and the normal procedure of aid to the civil power had been replaced, unnoticed, by practice based on necessity. There were so many attacks on patrols and convoys that action to reinforce the detachments attacked and then engage in strength the attackers had to be taken without reference to the civil power.

Early in the month a force of over a brigade in strength was deployed in the hills between Nablus and the coastal plain to hunt out two

large armed bands, each about a hundred strong. This operation had the effect of showing the Arabs that troops were not confined to the roads, but could and would hunt them deep in the hills. The bands, however, were too wily to become engaged with such strong forces. They broke into small parties and vanished, to hide in caves or play the part of peaceful villager. Only a few were brought to action and about ten casualties inflicted, while our losses were one soldier killed and one wounded.

Those who know hill warfare will realise how difficult it is to pin down a band of hillmen and keep them pinned so that heavy casualties can be inflicted. The hillman knows the ground intimately, is lightly clad, and can move much faster on the hill than any infantryman in boots. In Palestine the hills were difficult. Only aircraft could move faster than the Arabs. A combination of their speed and striking power with the slow but sure hunting and harrying power of infantry was the ideal arrangement. But, as soon as things became too hot for their liking, the Arabs would scatter, hide their arms, and if they could not get clear away, pose as innocent shepherds unavoidably entangled in a battle, of which they had received no notice.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

It was found that about five or six miles across steep hilly country, in the heat, was about all that could be expected of infantry, if the ground was to be properly swept and no parties of Arabs left hidden in cover, or in caves, to bob up at some inconvenient moment. It was a disadvantage that troops had usually to return to their camps or billets, instead of staying out on the ground for several days. When the Arabs saw them withdrawing to their transport to go home, they naturally felt that they were being left victorious in possession of the battlefield, no matter how many casualties they might have suffered.

This habit of going home to bed was due to three difficulties: lack of pack-transport, lack of suitable food, and difficulty over water. Mechanisation had its disadvantages: there were no pack-animals. The solution was to hire donkeys, but there were objections to hiring the Arab donkey-boys as well. They were rather young for battles. Suitable hard-tack rations exist, though not suitably made up for carrying on the man. But they seem to be going out of use, perhaps because they cost about a penny a man a day more than the normal stew. However, the South African



## EXTREME MODERATION, JULY 1936

War, which lasted more than a few days, was fought mainly on a basis of bully-beef and biscuit. The water difficulty was partly medical, partly civil, and partly a problem of pack-transport. Water in the hills came mainly from wells, and the Arabs needed all there was.

It seems sad but true that, in spite of improvements in modern soldiering and efforts to dodge the fact, the soldier must still be able to carry his food for a couple of days and the means of keeping warm at night if he is to stay out on ground like that of Palestine. Though he will never move as fast as a hillman, there is no point in making him slower than he is by being too particular about inhabitants. He should be able to take their shelter, their water, and their food, if necessary, give a receipt, and leave them to square accounts later.

In spite of all the difficulties, the troops had many successes in July. The most decisive engagement of the month was fought close to the main Jerusalem-Jaffa road. A small Arab band elected to raid just where the road leaves the hills to enter the plain. At that point it runs through a deep crescent-shaped glen, with scraggy trees adorning the steep rocky slopes on

either side. The Arabs paid too much attention to the road and were busy shooting at the troops below them. For some reason they neglected to guard the high ground behind them, and were caught by another body of troops and held between two fires. That mistake cost them eleven rifles, eleven lives, and about six hundred rounds of ammunition. Only three or four escaped.

Before the month ended the garrison was increased by a brigade headquarters and two more battalions, and reorganised in three brigade areas. But the gain was more than offset by the employment of large numbers of troops as anti-intimidation patrols in the streets of the towns. It was to the passive side of the task rather than to the objective side that force was diverted. The policy of extreme moderation still prevailed.

## CHAPTER XV.

### REBELLION AND EXTREME MODERATION, AUGUST 1936.

THE civil power in Palestine seemed to require a great deal of aid. By the beginning of August it had drawn into the country more than the equivalent of a division. In fact, all three services were represented—Navy, Army, and Air Force—and every branch of the Army was concerned in giving it aid. Even though the numbers available to aid were six or seven times what they had been in April, the effect on the Arabs was not very noticeable. But it has to be remembered that the civil power not only demanded aid but commanded how aid was to be given. It said what was to be done and what was not to be done, with particular emphasis on what was not to be done.

In August the Arabs still found ample opportunity for waging war against the government of the Mandatory Power. They were defying

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

not only the government of Palestine, but Britain as well. They had appealed to force. In the towns the opportunities were few, because there were too many troops concentrated there. Along the communications by road and by rail, between the main centres of population, however, there was ample opening for surprise attack, combined with good lines of escape. The threat of attack, combined with an occasional attack, had made the government resort to a convoy system for protection. In fact, the Arabs commanded the communications in Palestine, except when movement on them was carried out in strength.

In the rest of the country, the more remote hill areas which cover the greater part of Arab Palestine, Arab rule prevailed almost unchallenged. There the armed bands lived and moved as they pleased, dominating the villages and often taking their supplies. From these strongholds they went forth to attack the agents of British rule, or the Jews in their scattered colonies. To these strongholds they returned to rest in safety, undisturbed unless a temporary military invasion burst suddenly upon them. As a rule, they had ample warning and could move out of the way till the activity

died down and the troops went back to their camps.

From the Arab point of view it must have been a curious war, though they probably thought that we were doing our best. They were fairly safe as long as they watched their lines of escape when in action, and did not get caught by low-flying aircraft when they thought that they were catching some small party of infantry. They were perfectly safe in their villages, close by their women and children, as long as they hid their arms. They could move about as they pleased, to spy out the land and arrange the next ambush, as long as they did not walk about openly with their rifles over their shoulders. No matter what evil reputation the village might earn through the performance of its band, nobody in authority ever came to seize the young men and take them away to a prison camp for work on the roads.

From the British point of view it was also a curious war. There was aid and aid, but the junior commanders probably had the best time, because there was often something definite and practical about the aid they gave, even if it was just passively defensive. It must have been exciting to ride on a trolley on the railway

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

line looking for a spread in the rails, or a pin with a blue bead placed on it for luck, marking the striker of a buried shell. The watchers who looked for such things had to keep changing over in very short shifts, for the run of the rail under the trolley soon made their eyes go queer. Part of the excitement lay in keeping just the right distance ahead of the train, which the trolley was protecting so kindly, by offering to go off the rails or be blown up first. If the distance ahead was not enough and anything happened, the train was liable to charge into what was left of its advanced guard. If the distance was too great, the expert Arabs could spread or lift a rail between the trolley and the train. There was no doubt about the Arabs being expert. Once, hidden beside a damaged piece of line, were found, neatly laid out, all complete to nuts and screws, the things required to mend it. The platelayers were Arabs, and there were many retired platelayers living near the railway. Jewish labour cost too much for the Palestine railways, which do not pay.

Aiding a thing like a train which runs on rails in a definite direction, at a definite time, and at a known pace, was, of course, easy compared with the task of aiding the policy of the

## EXTREME MODERATION, AUGUST 1936

civil power. During August that policy seemed to be still ambling along the path of extreme moderation, sometimes appearing and more often disappearing in fog. For most of the month the fog was unusually thick. For example, the memorial of the senior Arab officials, after its arrival in England, drew forth a pronouncement which tended to decrease visibility. It declared that consideration might be given to a temporary suspension of Jewish immigration, but that the domination of any one community in Palestine over any other would not be tolerated.

That statement meant that the government might consider giving to those who had rebelled, something which could only be given at the expense of those who had not. That was indeed moderation in face of an appeal to force, though a form of moderation likely to encourage rebellion and appeals to force more than loyalty and maintenance of the peace. The government has since gone beyond mere consideration and has drastically reduced Jewish immigration without waiting for the Report of the Royal Commission.

The part of the statement that domination by one community would not be tolerated,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

seemed to suggest that no representative national government would be set up on any account in Palestine, because there must be domination if it were set up. That, in turn, raised the question whether the government had decided to give up the idea of leading the people of Palestine along the road to self-government, and intended, instead, to go on ruling the country autocratically. Alternatively, the question was whether the government had some idea of setting up a Palestinian Ulster side by side with a Palestinian Free State.

The British government seemed to be getting very involved over Palestine, even to the extent of becoming immoral as well as incoherent. It is difficult to understand why somebody reliable could not have been sent out from England to look at the place, which can be reached inside a week. Instead of that, everything was done by correspondence and little but vague statements resulted, perhaps in case an intelligible one might tie the hands of the Royal Commission. The British government seemed to be chasing two hares at once, and paying more attention to the distant future of Palestine than to the immediate problem of a rampant rebellion.



It had taken two months for the senior Arab officials to draw the vague promise of a concession out of the British government, when they might instead have been reminded of their duty as officials. It had taken about the same time for the junior Arab officials to load the second barrel of the memorial gun. By early August the task was completed and about two thousand signatures having been appended, the thing was presented at the government. Then Nuri Pasha arrived from Baghdad on a peaceful mission, and about the same time also from Baghdad came Fauzi with his armed bands on a warlike one. In fact, by the middle of August the plot was as incomprehensible as that of an average musical comedy.

Nuri Pasha was the foreign minister of an allied foreign power, Iraq, a predominantly Arab state. He came to Palestine to see what he could do to bring about peace between the government of Palestine and its Arab subjects, then in rebellion. He first discussed the problem with the government, and later met the Higher Arab Committee at the house of its president, the Mufti. The Committee, after the first meeting, was pleased to announce that it would allow negotiations to continue, but on the

understanding that the strike would continue also. It was, no doubt, very kind of Nuri Pasha to intervene in the internal affairs of Palestine. That, and trying to fix the price to be paid by Britain for buying off the strike, were what he was, in fact, doing. The price already offered by Britain was one Royal Commission and one half-promise regarding Jewish immigration. But, as far as the Mufti and his party were concerned, that price was quite inadequate.

The Mufti, at the time, was being heavily pressed. The National Defence Party, in opposition to him and his extreme policy on points of detail, endeavoured to score advantage and a measure of popular approval by playing more on war weariness than on anything of higher moral value. It did succeed in persuading the Higher Arab Committee to agree to conversations with the Amir of Transjordan. But the Amir was hardly in a position to persuade the government to make any offer more nearly approaching the price of peace for which the Palestinian Arab Party was holding out. The Amir had no desire to become directly involved in the troubles of Palestine at that time. Transjordan was quiet and free from intoxicating politics.

As a ruler of more than half the mandated territory, detached from though nominally under the High Commissioner in Palestine, he was bound to regard rebels from the point of view of a ruler, even though they were Arabs. There was, at no time, much hope of any advance along the lines proposed by the National Defence Party, and all hope vanished when the British government publicly declared that the Royal Commission would not move from England till the disorders stopped unconditionally. The fog, for the moment, had lifted.

The relatively moderate National Defence Party had not done itself or the cause of relative moderation any good. Those in power had means of checking tendencies to stray in the direction of moderation, or along any other path not approved by them. The editor of a relatively moderate Arab paper found it advisable to give up his moderate editorials when a party of armed men visited his house to discuss the matter. He happened to be out at the time of the visit, but the news of it was enough to make him change his opinions. Whether the Mufti himself approved the acts of persuasion done in support of the cause, or not, he and the Higher Arab Committee benefited

in that opposition was stifled. At all events, he never stated publicly that he disapproved.

Nuri Pasha left Palestine to continue his bargaining in Geneva and in London. The deadlock seemed to be complete. Beyond the possibility that it might consider the temporary suspension of Jewish immigration, the government would do nothing, and would not send out the Royal Commission to advise it till disorders stopped. On the Arab side the declared policy of the Higher Arab Committee, the body in unchallengeable control, remained unshaken in determination to go on with the strike till Jewish immigration and sales of land to Jews stopped, and till the government set up a representative national government in Palestine.

During August the rebellion entered the fifth month of its career of crime, and one might well stop to ask, what point was there in all these negotiations and declarations? They seemed to do little but distract attention from the business in hand, the arrest and removal of those who had resorted to force. The delay in facing the business in hand seemed to be producing the effect which prolonged strife always does produce. Those involved in it

grow accustomed to it and lose their sense of proportion. They begin to see nothing odd in intimidation, ambushes, curfews, and battles. If a gang of hooligans indulged in a rough-and-tumble with the clergy and choir in the middle of a cathedral, the thing would be called an outrage. But in Palestine, with Britain responsible for law and order, things more deplorable had come to be regarded as part of the daily service.

By the end of the month casualties in H.M. Forces had risen to eleven killed and seventy-three wounded. The rebellion had become markedly more serious. In the last week of the month the amount of ammunition fired by the troops reached a record. In fact, the term disorder no longer described the state of affairs, though for some reason the civil authorities never called it what it was, a rebellion. The rebels were undoubtedly becoming bolder, better led, and better armed. On several occasions the Army and the Royal Air Force in co-operation engaged large armed bands in actions which sometimes lasted the whole day. In one of these, a battle near Nablus, the presence of Syrian and Iraqi invaders, which had been suspected for some time, was confirmed. Among

the rebel bodies left on the ground, eight were those of Syrians, Druses, or Iraqis. Perhaps their arrival did more to harden the attitude of the Higher Arab Committee than the visit of Nuri Pasha did to soften it.

These invaders had crossed the frontiers into Palestine unmolested, and no reliable official knew how they had entered nor how long they had been in the country. The problem of the Palestinian frontiers still calls for solution, as does the problem of the control of arms and explosives. One feature of this lack of control was responsible for several casualties among the armed forces.

For some reason, not much had been done to remove and drop into the Mediterranean the large dumps of shells left over from the war. If nobody else knew where to find these shells, the Arabs did, because they made skilful use of them on roads as well as on the railway. As a rule, these land mines were laid on soft roads where they were more easy to conceal than on tarmac. The usual method employed was to set them for contact by boring into the side of the shell-case and fitting a pin with a percussion cap. Sometimes obstructions were put down to make vehicles go where the traps

had been set. It is remarkable that the damage done by these mines, some of which were in the form of pretty sturdy high-explosive shells, was not much greater. But apparently the tyres of the cars by bursting, in some way mitigated the effect of the exploding shell.

So the troops went on with the war, which by the end of August seemed to have become a fight to a finish between the government on the one hand, and the Higher Arab Committee and those who adhered to it on the other. But the war plan of the authority in control of the forces of government, the civil power, did not go much beyond leaving the troops to fight the bands whenever the two happened to meet.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### REBELLION AND INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936.

SEPTEMBER was not three days old when suddenly, in London, the Cabinet lost patience with Palestine, at least so it seemed. Telegrams whizzed about the country, manœuvres were cancelled, and a few days later the purpose behind these unexpected orders and comings and goings was explained in the Press. His Majesty's government reaffirmed their previous decisions that order must be restored in Palestine and British authority re-established in the country, and further resolved that intensive measures to crush resistance should be taken, and with that object the troops in Palestine should be reinforced by a division, less artillery, and at the appropriate moment martial law should be applied either to the whole country or to selected parts.

There was no doubt about these decisions at



## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

first sight, and no time was wasted in giving effect to some of them. Ships were chartered and a movement programme drawn up whereby the 1st Division from Aldershot would be in Palestine by the end of the month, except for two or three battalions due there in the first days of October. Not only was the 1st Division to go, but it was to go fat. The Section A reservists were called up to bring its units up to working strength.

Section A of the Army Reserve is a select reserve, which can be called up without Parliamentary sanction. Every year in every unit of the Army, a number of men come to the end of their seven or eight years of active service and enter their five or four years of reserve service. Of these men, a few in each unit are offered vacancies in Section A of the reserve. In exchange for the liabilities which they undertake they receive a small increase in their reserve pay.

The liabilities have increased with the increased liability of Britain to become involved in sub-wars. The original idea was that these Section A reservists would be called up to serve in their old units if these units had to take an active part in some imperial commitment. In practice,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

however, the men may find themselves serving in any regiment. In 1927 they were called up for service in China. Then, so many were required that men of units not represented in the force had to be called up to complete the numbers needed. But then they were put into units of like kind. For example, light infantrymen served in light infantry regiments, which are just like any other infantry of the line, except that they have to march in a rather unnatural manner. But in the case of Palestine last year they were all mixed up, and even Highlanders found themselves wearing English trousers. More mixing might do the Army no harm in general, but it is not so good when only done in an emergency.

These Section A men are the best of soldiers. Both in China and in Palestine they served strange units just as well as they would have served their own. Whether they got the leg-wear to which they were accustomed as soldiers when called back to active service is a matter of minor importance. What does matter is that they should get back their employment when the emergency is over. Too many reservists who went to Palestine last September are still, in the middle of 1937, out of employment.

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

The calling up of some reservists last September was but one feature of the general rush which put, not Palestine, but those caught up in it in the news for a few short days. Cinema news reels were full of pictures of troops in sun-helmets going up gangways into ships, while bands played and people waved. The sun-helmets, or rather the problem of who should pay for them, the wearer or the State, raised almost as many questions in the House of Commons as the whole Palestinian episode.

The new G.O.C. in Palestine was rushing eastward through the Mediterranean in H.M.S. *Douglas* with what the Norsemen call the oldest and the strongest of all the winds, the north wind, blowing a good stiff soldier's breeze under a bright blue sky. Ten days behind came the Generals commanding the 1st and 5th Divisions, with their staffs and the first flight of the reinforcements. So great was the rush that soldiers found themselves seated in the great dining saloon of a summer cruise liner, to be waited on by stewards. And then came Palestine.

Palestine has an atmosphere of its own, and Jerusalem has another, but the element of rush is not a component part of either. The new

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

arrivals were a trifle damped, as if they had rushed into a club smoking-room on a hot afternoon, or invaded Madame Tussaud on an off-day to pause surprised before rows of silent figures and feel the stigma of not being a wax-work. The atmosphere of Palestine seemed silently to pose the question, what are you doing here? this is where we live. That at once induced reference to the contract.

The contract spoke of reaffirming a previous decision that order must be restored in Palestine and British authority re-established in the country. That sounded clear, except that nobody seemed ever to have heard of the previous decision, and it did not say definitely that we were to restore order and re-establish British authority. Possibly the Arabs were to do both of these things by stopping their rebellion. It also seemed a little weak to talk of re-establishing British authority. That called attention to the fact that it was not established, even though the rebellion was about to complete the fifth month of its run. However, the contract also spoke of intensive measures to crush resistance and of martial law at the appropriate moment. So it did read as if the intention was that we should take action. The suspicion that

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

intensive measures might mean no more than reinforcing the garrison by a division did not seem justified after reading the whole statement.

Then, just as the first reinforcements began to arrive, there arrived also news of a change in the contract. Martial law was off. In its place there was to be statutory martial law. An Order in Council defining the form which this was to take was due to be signed by the King on the 26th of September. That date was just a fortnight after the new G.O.C. had arrived and taken over command in Palestine.

The relative merits of martial law and statutory martial law are not the points of importance, and it has been suggested in an earlier chapter that there are objections to plain martial law under the British system of rule. The point of importance was, and still is, the extraordinary delay in deciding what form emergency rule was to take in Palestine. The delay arose because the problem of emergency rule has never been tackled as a problem.

The procedure for delegating authority to adopt emergency rule is defined and must follow along constitutional lines, from the Cabinet to the Government Office concerned,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

in this case the Colonial Office, thence to the head of the local government, and so to a senior officer of the armed forces, if deemed necessary to delegate so far. The authority in the first instance must originate from the King. But, as long as the detailed nature of the authority remained undefined, it was impossible to apply either martial law or statutory martial law in Palestine, unless the state of the country made it necessary for the commander on the spot to take action on his own responsibility.

The state of Palestine in September 1936 was much the same as it has been for months, bad enough to justify local and temporary assumptions of control by military commanders in battles with bands, bad enough to justify intensive measures by the civil power, but just not bad enough to necessitate an assumption of control over the whole country by the senior military commander. The civil power was still in control, and it was considering the nature of the proposed intensive measures.

The decision to resort to intensive measures was made on the 3rd of September in London. The Order in Council defining the powers to be granted to the High Commissioner, all, or

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

part, of which he might delegate to the G.O.C., was signed on the 26th of the month. The Order in Council reached Palestine in the first days of October. The moment of arrival of an order at any headquarters can never be the moment of action on its contents. The order has to be studied and then orders based on it have to be issued. There must be some delay. It was during this period of delay that the Mufti called off the strike.

It had taken the civil authorities seven weeks to put a decision into a form which would make it possible for those on the spot to give practical effect to it. Even then the task was not complete. Had it still been necessary to do so, the military authorities would have then had to begin to frame statutory martial law regulations. While martial law orders require only three or four general paragraphs, statutory martial law regulations have to be drawn up article by article, like a long code of rules. That requires time to prepare and print, especially when the printing has to be done in three official languages, as in Palestine. The civil authorities cannot be congratulated on their staff work.

The effect on the military authorities of the introduction of statutory martial law in the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

middle of a rebellion or sub-war is that they are unready for action for a period. That period lasts until they know exactly what they may have to do under the new rules and have had time to make ready the necessary instructions.

There was every reason to be ready. Though the decision of the British government did have the effect of reducing the intensity of the rebellion for a brief period about the second week in September, the lull was short-lived. The intensity may be judged from the casualties inflicted on the armed forces of the Crown. In the last two months of the rebellion they equalled the number inflicted during the first four months. Thus the intensity increased towards the end, while the activities of armed bands increased also, and their distribution about the country became wider. In fact, an appropriate moment to take energetic action in the interests of peace and good order seemed to be passing almost once a minute throughout every day.

During the first few days of the new G.O.C.'s command, things were comparatively quiet, but as the following brief day to day account shows, that quietness would hardly satisfy anyone with a normal regard for order and



## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

law, and the reputation of Britain as a ruling power.

The 14th of September was a quiet day, but there was considerable sniping, and the telegraph lines were cut in several places. In the Jewish settlements a number of trees were destroyed. On the road between Jerusalem and Jericho a bridge was blown up, and in the north the presence of a band of about two hundred strong with some Syrians was reported. On the 15th a small battle took place near Tiberias, in which three Arabs were killed. On the main railway line there was a bad derailment north of Lydda, and a patrol trolley was also derailed near Haifa. Sniping and cutting of telegraph lines became worse, and a further two thousand trees were destroyed. The I.P.C. pipe-line, running across the country from north of Beisan to Haifa, was punctured and set on fire. This often happened. The 16th was a day of minor incidents among which an armoured car patrol was ambushed near Gaza and the pipe-line was punctured and fired in three places. On the 17th two cavalry cars were damaged by land mines in the Gaza area, while at the opposite end of the country the Trans-jordan Frontier Force put in a mounted charge

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

against a party of armed men near Beisan. The pipe-line was again in trouble, while on the railway the total number of bombs or mines which had gone off during the week amounted to sixteen. The 18th was a very quiet day, with nothing of note beyond the usual sniping and a little bomb-throwing. The 19th was much the same, though the pipe-line was damaged again. On the 20th a small action in the Mount Carmel area resulted in one Arab being killed and one wounded, while a rifle and ammunition were captured. The 21st was also quiet, but for sniping and some bomb-throwing.

Between the 22nd of September and the end of the month the situation became more interesting, because, in that period, the bulk of the reinforcements, the units of the 1st Division, were due to move by road and rail through the 5th Division to their stations in the Southern District. That had to happen because the port of disembarkation was Haifa in the north, and because it had been decided to keep the troops which knew the country in the more disturbed part of it, and station the new arrivals in the Jaffa-Jerusalem-Hebron area. The 5th Division was to have its headquarters at Haifa

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

when it arrived, and already two of its brigades were in the north, one with headquarters in Haifa and the other at Nazareth. The third brigade of that division was being organised and was to have its headquarters in Nablus, the ill-mannered. When the 1st Division arrived it was to have its headquarters in Jerusalem, with one brigade allotted to that area and another to the Jaffa area, while the third of its brigades formed the force reserve in Jerusalem.

The problem of stuffing little Palestine so full of troops had been solved as well as circumstances permitted. There were barracks for only two battalions in the whole country, which was now faced with the problem of accommodating twenty-two, not to mention two cavalry regiments and various engineer, signal, supply, and medical units. Educational institutions provided a good deal of the required accommodation, much to the indignation of some people. Protests poured in, and the Arabs helpfully suggested that the troops should live in the open in order to harden them, instead of starving the intellectual development of their young by usurping their schools.

The stage was set to test the military ability

of the famous Fauzi and his bands of armed warriors from within and without Palestine. There was no secrecy about the move of the 1st Division—it had been well advertised in the papers—and there was nothing secret about the port of Haifa. The troops were to move by train along that railway from Haifa to Lydda, on which bombs were constantly exploding and rails failing to stay parallel. Their transport, in long columns of new vehicles, with new drivers who had never driven on the right-hand side of narrow roads round hairpin bends, was to snake its way all in among the stronghold hills of the rebels, through Jenin and Nablus, or Tulkarm, on its way to Jerusalem or Jaffa. What a chance for an Arabian Lawrence !

But remarkably little happened. Protective detachments were increased and strengthened along the main railway line. That proved enough to scare away saboteurs and ambushers. Every train passed through with no more incident than might be expected on a run from London to York, the time of the exposure being about the same, though the distance was not more than a third.

The defence of the road was more difficult than the defence of the railway, because the

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

country was more difficult, but the road was less important. Whereas, on the railway, humanity would be moving massed in trains, and therefore be in a vulnerable situation, on the roads the movement would be more spread out and more in the form of material than of men.

At the time it was not possible to say whether the enemy would go for the road or the railway. There was no reason why he should not attack both, though the railway lay farther away from the hills and would be more difficult to approach secretly with a strong armed band. Preparations had to be made to protect both. Then on the 22nd of September reports began to come in that there were strong parties of armed Arabs in the Nablus area. As usual when reports of that kind arrive events seemed to belie them, for on that same day there was an action with a strong armed band in the far north between Acre and Safad, in which the Arabs suffered heavy casualties and one soldier was killed, while about the same time troops were engaged in a skirmish with another band near Mount Tabor, in the Nazareth area. Then on the 23rd the main activities of the day took place in the north-east around Beisan.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

However, on the afternoon of the 24th, fighting began a few miles to the north of Nablus, and it became clear that the enemy was intending to attack the columns of motor transport moving south from Haifa. He evidently preferred to stay in the hills near his bases among the hill villages, rather than move to the west into the plain to attack the railway. But, while Fauzi and his forces were hunting, they were also being hunted. He no doubt had information that a column of transport was approaching the tangled mountain area in which he had concentrated his forces, close to the winding road. His information was correct, but by one of these lucky chances which intervene on these occasions the column was having some mechanical trouble with one or two of its vehicles, and its commander elected to turn the whole lot round and go back to Haifa for repairs.

Meanwhile, information regarding Fauzi and his men had reached the proper quarter, and troops from the south were on the move to find him, while more from the north were advancing through the hills in the hope of blocking his line of retreat. Then some suspicious movement was spotted from the air.

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

The pilot, flying low, saw a number of mounted men among a scattered party of armed Arabs. They seemed to be wearing a kind of uniform and looked like officers, one in particular inviting attention by wearing a well-polished pair of field-boots. They were trotting in a string along a narrow track in a hurry to get away. The machine circled round to attack, but just as the pilot began to fire, chance again intervened and he was hit. Luckily he managed to find a small space just good enough by the roadside, and managed to make a successful forced landing close by a party of troops.

In the shortest possible space of time air reinforcements were out, and a complicated series of actions went on till dusk over an area of several miles, troops and aircraft gaining, then losing, and then regaining contact with the enemy. On the western part of this area of confused fighting the Arabs carried out a skilful rear-guard action, giving ground only when forced to do so, but the Air hit them hard and they suffered heavy casualties. Some miles farther west other Arab forces were found and fought by the troops of another battalion moving down on them from the north, and again the Air had a chance to strike. All

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

day the hunting of the bands went on, and only stopped when the light failed.

Next day, the 25th, the troops were out again searching for any sign of enemy activity, but only one small party of armed rebels was brought to action, and only three casualties were inflicted on them before they dispersed. The Arabs were lying low, and continued to lie low for several days. It was not till the 29th that they approached the main road again, and then they did almost exactly what they had done before. Again they were discovered and engaged in plenty of time. The action took place in the same area as before and followed a very similar course, but this time the striking forces of four battalions were out. Two managed to gain contact with the elusive enemy, and with the help of the Royal Air Force kept them engaged. Whenever that could be done, the results were decisive. In opposing the troops the Arabs offered good targets to the aircraft, and as a result suffered many casualties before they could break up into small groups and scatter into cover among the rocks and olive groves.

That was all that happened. Fauzi, with his foreign invaders and all the Palestinian bands



## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

co-operating with him, did next to nothing but suffer casualties. Whenever he tried to come where he was not welcome the initiative was taken out of his hands, and he and his men were hunted and harried till darkness saved them. The long vulnerable columns of motor transport passed through his strongholds to their destinations without a hitch, except when one turned back to Haifa for repairs. Yet, when the rebellion ended, the Arabs made a national hero of this somewhat ineffectual Fauzi and took to selling post-card photographs of him throughout the country for relatively large sums, the excess profits going to the fund for 'distressed Palestine,' which became the new title of the Mufti's famous 'strike fund.'

These operations against armed bands were a form of military aid to the civil power, but it is to be noted that the aid was normally given without reference to the aided. That is inevitable when a country is beset by gangs of armed men, who sit in forcible possession of parts of it, and thence descend to attack the servants of the State and those who remain loyal to its government. When a country falls into that deplorable condition, it just comes to pass that the military power assumes a duty

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

with regard to the armed enemies of the State in the tactical sphere. In all other spheres, however, the civil power retains control, and with it rests the initiative in taking action against those, who make use of armed bands but do not take the field with them, who pay them and arrange for their armament and subsistence. It rests also with the civil power to deal with prisoners captured in action or when bearing arms. If, as in Palestine, the civil power takes no action within its sphere and fails to see a connection between battles and those who support armed rebels with words, money, arms, or food, then the battles inevitably continue. In fact, military aid to the civil power becomes a long and costly business if there is inadequate or no civil aid to the military power. The two should act in close harmony, with one object in view.

Late one evening, after battling all day, the troops stepped out of the tactical sphere into the civil sphere. On arrival in Nablus they were greeted with rifle-fire by the ill-mannered inhabitants, who then settled down to snipe their camp and billets. The officer commanding naturally hesitated to open enough fire to remove the offending snipers, as many of them were firing

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

from the roofs of houses in the town. Even if every male inhabitant deserved a bullet, there were women and children to consider. The local representative of the civil power happened to be away fulfilling a social engagement, so the officer commanding sent a polite invitation to the Mayor to come and visit his headquarters to see how his burgesses were behaving. He was no stranger to the Arabs; he knew their customs and spoke their language.

The Mayor thought an escort was desirable in case some sentry shot him, so an escort was provided, and the Mayor arrived. As soon as he arrived all the sniping stopped. He was politely entertained, and informed that it would be perhaps better if he stayed the night. The guest was then given a bed on the flat roof. Next day, soon after the Mayor had returned to his own house, the sub-war counter-attack began. The local National Committee met and passed resolutions, telegrams of protest were sent off to the authorities in Jerusalem, and the Mayor is said to have threatened to hand back his O.B.E.

Those who have the unpleasant duty of restoring order when the authority of the civil power breaks down have, by law, to use

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

just enough force and no more than necessary to achieve the object, the restoration of order. The officer commanding in Nablus had restored order with the least possible use of force, whereas the inhabitants of the town had behaved in an outrageous manner. But, by skilful agitation, extending in a remarkably short space of time as far as the House of Commons, they managed to throw a cloak over their own misdeeds and create the impression that the only villain was the officer commanding the troops.

That particular attempt to put the military in the wrong failed. However, it affords an example of what frequently happens when H.M. Forces have to deal with insurrection or rebellion. The immediate result is that those who are trying to maintain or restore order have to divert all their energies to explain and justify their action. It is a question whether we do not allow too much latitude to those who challenge the action of H.M. Forces.

By the end of September there was still no sign of action on the decisions made in London on the 3rd of the month and no trace whatever in Palestine of intensive measures. The state

## INTENSIVE MEASURES, SEPTEMBER 1936

of the country was, if anything, rather worse. Every day told the same tale of bombing, sniping, cutting of telegraphs, punctures in the pipe-line, explosions of land mines, ambushes, arson, and murder. and almost every other day the troops managed to have a fight with an armed band in some part of the country.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### REBELLION AND THE ART OF YIELDING, OCTOBER 1936.

JUST one month after the decisions of the British government to reinforce the garrison in Palestine and resort to intensive measures to re-establish its authority in the country at the appropriate moment, the situation became interesting, though bewildering. On the 3rd of October there were strong rumours that the strike would soon end. The Arab kings, that is to say the rulers of the Yemen, of Saudi Arabia, of Iraq and of Transjordan had been persuaded, invited, or allowed, it is not clear which, to intervene in the internal affairs of Palestine in order to advise the president of the Higher Arab Committee, the Mufti. They were to advise him about restoring peace in the country. He was to restore peace by not doing something, instead of the government of the country restoring it by doing something.

## THE ART OF YIELDING

One of these rulers, the Amir of Transjordan, was a ruler within the mandate. The other three were rulers of foreign Arab States, one of which, Iraq, was allied to Britain and a member of the League of Nations. They were then in process of deciding among themselves how to intervene. As they did eventually deliver an agreed letter of advice to the Higher Arab Committee, there must have been negotiations first, among them, regarding the wording of the letter.

On that same date, the 3rd of October, the military authorities were ready to apply intensive measures, and by then the reinforcing units had all arrived in the country, except two or three battalions still on their way. The text of the September Order in Council, defining the form which emergency rule was to take should the moment ever become appropriate, had just reached Palestine. Somewhere about this date there began the period of delay due to the decision that, if it became necessary, statutory martial law was to be enforced and not plain martial law. The Order in Council was a complicated document requiring close study. No doubt some of its clauses required elucidation. Meanwhile, the Arab kings appear

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

to have been arranging among themselves the form which their advice to the Higher Arab Committee should take.

By that date, the 3rd of October, a confusing medley of forces were in operation, pulling in all directions. Political pressure was, without doubt, being exerted on the Mufti and on members of the Higher Arab Committee. Surely use was made of the threat of military force, and no doubt the horrible consequences which must follow the imposition of martial law as defined in the Order in Council, which had been published, were in no way minimised. To the uninitiated, it might seem that it would have been more straightforward just to give the Mufti twenty-four hours or so, in which to call off his strike or take the consequences. But the objection to that simple idea was that it would be very rude to the Arab kings, now that they had consented to intervene.

For other reasons, the moment was still inappropriate for an application of sanctions. There were still outstanding these questions regarding the implications of the Order in Council. Till they were cleared up, the military authorities could not be deemed officially to be ready, even if they had guessed the answers



## THE ART OF YIELDING

correctly. For some reason, British policy seemed to have changed completely between the 3rd of September and the 3rd of October. It was no longer thinking of intensive measures to crush resistance, but of ways and means of avoiding action on its previous decision.

There was one factor which did not seem to enter very much into the official calculations, the economic factor, which must have been pulling its weight with the Arab leaders. The time was rapidly approaching when the oranges would be ripening, and it was already almost time to begin ploughing. Soon the normal citizen would be too busy with his own affairs for practical nationalism, and the shopkeepers were sick of their strike.

Nevertheless, the Higher Arab Committee was still holding out for a stoppage of Jewish immigration as a condition of peace. It also wanted an amnesty for all internees and for all prisoners already tried and sentenced or awaiting trial, for offences connected with the rebellion. It also wanted to be pressed by the Arab kings, not merely to have its face saved. If the Arab kings were allowed to advise, that meant an admission by Britain that the problem of the Arabs of Palestine was one which con-

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

cerned all the Arabs of Arabia. That amounted to a step on the way to nationalism, while the advent of the Royal Commission was likely in time to bring things a step nearer representative government.

So there were really only two questions outstanding, the immigration question and the amnesty question. Sales of land had become a matter of Arab discipline. Hunting and harrying everything to an early solution was the economic situation and the approach of the rains, while behind all the confusion of negotiation was the military big stick, ready for use, if the Higher Arab Committee failed, within reasonable time, to call off its six months old strike unconditionally.

Meanwhile, neither the Arab kings nor the Higher Arab Committee seemed to be in any particular hurry, and the state of the country showed no improvement whatever. On the 1st there were four small actions in the Northern District, and several aircraft were up to co-operate with the troops. One of these actions was merely a brush with smugglers, and resulted in captures of silk, tobacco, arms, and ammunition. The 2nd was quiet, with little more than the pipe-line in the news. On the 3rd

## THE ART OF YIELDING

an isolated police post was attacked by about twenty armed men, who shot the police sergeant. The 4th and 5th were reasonably quiet, except that a cavalry car on patrol was blown up by a land mine south of Gaza and a railway patrol came into action near Tel Aviv on finding the line had been damaged. Otherwise there was just the usual sniping and cutting of telegraph lines. On the 6th a Royal Air Force machine searching for an armed band rumoured to be in the area south of Bethlehem found it, engaged it, and was hit three times. On the next day troops hunting in the same area found the band, shot the leader, and captured the Mufti's cousin, the voluble one.

The main forces of rebellion seemed to be lying low, though on the 8th a tank which broke down and had to remain out for the night in the area in which the armed bands usually performed, was attacked in the dark. One Arab climbed on to it and tried to force an entry with a rock, but was swept off by swinging the gun. One man of the tank's crew was slightly wounded, but the Arabs suffered about fifteen casualties in their gallant but somewhat wild efforts to capture a tempting prize. In these circumstances, the military authorities

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

had to maintain readiness, watching their guess at statutory martial law regulations and amending it whenever graced with a decision on a point of detail, in case the civil power might suddenly lose patience and switch from its prolonged policy of conciliation in face of rebellion to a policy of sanctions.

On the 8th of October the Higher Arab Committee received the advice of the Arab kings, and at once became very active. The District National Committees were brought into consultation, and on the 11th the Arab leaders published their decision :—

“ The Higher Arab Committee has decided, after consideration and consultation with members of the Local Committees from whom agreement was received, to publish the text of the Arab kings’ appeal. We call upon the noble Arab people to remain steadfast and quiet in ending this period of strike and unrest on Monday morning. The Higher Arab Committee calls upon the Arab people to arise early on Monday morning for prayers in the Mosques for those who have fallen in our struggle. Following the prayers, the Arab people should return to their stores places of business, and their regular work.”

## THE ART OF YIELDING

The text of the letter of appeal from the Arab kings was :—

“ Through the President of the Higher Arab Committee to our sons the Arabs of Palestine.

“ We are greatly concerned on account of the present situation in Palestine. For this reason, we have agreed with our brothers the Kings and Emir to call upon you to re-establish peace and order to save further shedding of blood. In doing this, we rely on the good intentions of our friend, Great Britain, which has declared that it will do justice. You may rely on us to continue our efforts to assist you.”

A perusal of these two appeals will arouse wrath or admiration according to taste. They speak for themselves. Apart from them, a situation of interest now developed in Palestine. Everyone was wondering what would happen after the strike had been called off. There were two schools of thought. One maintained that the Higher Arab Committee was in full control of the rebellion from top to bottom in all its branches, including the armed bands, and that therefore, if it ever came to an ultimatum, forty-eight hours' notice to stop or take the consequences would be perfectly fair. The other school maintained that the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Higher Arab Committee was a purely political body, with no control whatever over the armed bands in the hills. It held that it was quite possible that military action against the bands would have to continue, as a distinct issue, after the rest of the country reverted to normal. It also held that much more than forty-eight hours—in fact, some period like ten days—would have to be allowed to the Mufti before it would be fair to decide that he was failing to control his followers.

It was therefore interesting to see how the rebellion was called off, even though the policy of conciliation had taken things beyond splitting hairs over a trifle such as the difference between forty-eight hours and ten days. The staff work of the Arab leaders seemed to be excellent. Cars conveying personages of importance in the movement radiated in all directions from the headquarters of the Higher Arab Committee. A similar radiation then extended in all directions from the headquarters of the various District Committees. When cars could go no farther into the hills, mounted men took over, and so the word penetrated to every branch of rebel activity and to every band. By the morning of Tuesday the 13th of October,

## THE ART OF YIELDING

within forty-eight hours, the strike was effectively off. Normal traffic was resumed on the roads and all the shops opened.

There was only one hitch in the proceedings. On the 16th in the far north of the country, within a few miles of the Syrian frontier, some troops were attacked by a band. An action developed with aircraft co-operating, and the band was driven north with casualties, the troops having an officer and a soldier wounded. The band in question was probably composed of Syrians and Druses returning to their own country.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Arab armed forces, presumably Fauzi, was not behindhand with his special order, which was issued on the 12th, the day on which the rebellion ended. It was addressed to the holy warriors in the districts and on the battle fronts of Palestine. It requested them to stop acts of violence completely, but also requested them to keep their arms safe and sound and be ready in case called upon to use them again. It contained a threat that anyone who failed to comply with the request would be regarded as a traitor to the cause and become liable to punishment. It concluded by welcoming peace and promising

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

to respect it, and ended with praise for the courage of those who had fought the nation's battles.

The G.O.C.'s Special Order to the troops was not so fortunate. It also was issued on the 12th, and a copy was sent to the Press Bureau in the Secretariat, through which communications to the Press were issued. The Order read :—

“The strike and armed rebellion have been called off unconditionally by the Higher Arab Committee as from to-day. This result is in great measure due to the resolute and energetic action of the three Services, in spite of hampering and difficult circumstances. Cordial co-operation between them has enabled many severe blows to be inflicted on the rebels, and made it possible to maintain all essential services. Our thanks are due to the Palestine police, without whose loyal co-operation many of our efforts would have been fruitless.

“It is to be hoped that the campaign of murder and banditry will now cease. For some time, however, it will be necessary for all ranks to keep themselves in readiness for instant action in support of law and order.

“I feel sure that the three Services co-operating under my command will maintain the high



## THE ART OF YIELDING

reputation which they have already established, and, by the courtesy and consideration they show to the inhabitants of Palestine, assist in the restoration of more normal conditions."

As Press correspondents were given every facility to visit troops, they were bound to come in contact with the Order. It was therefore considered better to let them all have it from the Press Bureau rather than leave its discovery to the quickest off the mark in the everlasting competition that goes on among them. But that afternoon the civil authorities banned publication of the Order in Palestine. That evening it was being aired all over Palestine in the Empire broadcast. A reporter of a local paper, who was also correspondent with some agency in England, had applied the ban to one part of himself and telegraphed the Order to London with the other, and back it came in a remarkably short space of time on the air. A week later it arrived again with the English papers, some of which had leading articles warmly supporting the theory that the troops had had something to do with the stoppage of the rebellion.

It must be admitted that the calling off of

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the rebellion was efficiently managed by the the Arab leaders and well obeyed by the Arabs. Then they spoilt it all. They seemed quite satisfied that they had won their war; that the intervention of the Arab kings meant that they would intervene again if necessary, and that, therefore, Arab nationalism in the wider sense was an established fact. They could feel reasonably sure that Jewish immigration was likely to be much restricted, if not stopped. But still they were not satisfied. At once the full force of political activity was directed to a boycott of the Jews, in order to benefit Arab trade. The Jews then followed suit and boycotted the Arabs.

It must also be admitted that the Arabs had had a remarkably free run for their rebellion. The conciliation policy of the British and Palestinian governments had been carried to extreme lengths. The rebellion had been given a six months' run without the imposition of any intensive measures of repression. In that time the Arabs had killed twenty-five and wounded one hundred and twenty members of H.M. Forces, killed seven and wounded forty British police, and killed nine and wounded sixty-four Palestinian members of the police

## THE ART OF YIELDING

force; while the whole rebellion had cost at least three hundred dead and thirteen hundred men and women wounded.

Yet there are large numbers of people who call Britain imperialist, the Mufti among them. There are others who would like to find some other title for the British Empire, in order to dodge the tainted noun. They seem to ignore the power of the adjective before that noun. But the question which arises out of the events which have taken place in Palestine during the last year, is whether that adjective British denotes strength or weakness.

There is strength in yielding. In physical contest between one man and another, the strength which lies in yielding has been developed into the art of ju-jitsu. The word ju means yield and the word jitsu means art. In political contest between nations Britain has applied the principles of the art of ju-jitsu, in a wider field, with a success which has earned for her the nickname 'perfidious Albion.'

However, it is less a question of strength or weakness than a question of right or wrong. To strike the exact balance between strength and weakness, or the exact balance between conciliation and sanctions, would be right, while

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

it would be wrong to be too weak or too strong, too conciliatory or too forcible.

The problem is Britain's great experiment in leading peoples along the way to governing themselves. The key to judgment between right and wrong lies in the answer to the question whether the methods adopted by Britain tend towards peace. It is not only a question of balancing conflicting forces. It will not do to balance forces in a way which tides things over for the moment, regardless of moral standards and respect for order and law. It is a question of balancing forces in such a way that sound standards of conduct, the foundations of peace, shall be maintained as a basis throughout the process of achieving the object.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY.

THE armistice began on the 12th of October 1936, and will continue till the Arabs either accept the decisions of the British Government on the findings of the Royal Commission, or appeal to force again. If they accept, that will be the end of that particular rebellion, and presumably it will become the turn of the Jews to nurse a grievance.

The situation which began to exist after the 12th of October was not officially regarded as equivalent to an armistice. Officially, the Arabs had called off their strike unconditionally. But in actual fact the situation fulfilled all the conditions normally found in an armistice. The Arabs kept their organisations, their arms, and their funds intact. They did not have to give up anything as a pledge of future good faith. On the contrary, they openly said that they

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

were just watching and waiting, ready to take up arms again, if the British Government did not come to an acceptable arrangement with their leaders. They also maintained their intimidation in undiminished intensity, to ensure that no Arab had dealings with a Jew. The service of intimidation was useful also in the collection of funds. It is true that the label on the money-box had been altered from 'strike fund' to 'distressed Palestine,' but otherwise there was no change.

H.M. Forces, after a few days of precautionary activity, reverted to the procedure which is normal in giving aid to the civil power. Instructions were issued that aid was not to be given, except in cases of obvious necessity, without the approval of the G.O.C. No action was to be taken against any inhabitants, except to resist and overcome aggression and make arrests. A few road picquets were, however, still maintained to protect vulnerable stretches of the main Jerusalem-Haifa road. The task of dealing with minor disorder and breaches of the law thus reverted to the police, while the troops resumed their normal life.

But for intimidation, boycott, and armed bands, the situation was about normal for

## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

Palestine. The intimidation and boycott could only be dealt with by action against the organisers at one end of the process, and by the laying of information by those intimidated at the other. Nothing was done at either end, so intimidation and boycott went on.

The armed bands were perhaps rather a peculiar feature of the local scenery, still armed and still banded, but then the scenery was odd. Two or three officers, with a few men, out shooting chikor met a band on the move, and both parties regarded one another with interest, wondering what was going to happen, but there was no incident. On another occasion a brigadier, paying a visit to the headman of a village in the hills, was met by the Arab in question, when short of his destination, and tactfully persuaded to take another, much better and more suitable, road. The village obviously had visitors.

After about ten days of that kind of armistice the civil power decided that it wanted some military aid, and asked for it. By then it was clear that various armed bands were still sitting virtually in armed occupation of parts of the country, particularly those round Tulkarm, Nablus, and Jenin. They seemed to be more or

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

less openly training for the next war, though otherwise behaving correctly, in that they were not aggressive. Fauzi and some of his invaders seemed to be running a kind of training school for the instruction of selected Palestine Arabs in the art of armed rebellion.

No doubt it was during this period that photographs were taken of Fauzi inspecting his troops, taking the salute as they marched past, watching through field-glasses the retreat of the British forces, of Arabs in action, shooting at aircraft with automatic weapons, or lining trenches to repel an attack. At any rate, very soon after, picture post-cards, with suitable titles in Arabic, were on sale all over Palestine and Transjordan, showing how we did not win the war, while Fauzi did.

The civil authorities meanwhile had come to the conclusion that all this was a little too brazen, and asked the military authorities to take steps to arrest, disperse, and disarm the bands. Experience had proved the futility of operations prepared in co-operation with the police and civil authorities and then carried out in conjunction with them, because news of what was intended invariably leaked out. It had also revealed the disadvantages of just



#### ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

going out for the day. So the military authorities agreed to deal with the situation, but in a way of their own, which seemed likely to lead to results.

On the 22nd of October troops made some preliminary movements to block the exits from Palestine leading into Transjordan. Fauzi and his foreign legionaries were not likely to make for Syria, as he and no doubt some of them were wanted by the French. The main operations, involving the bulk of the troops to be employed, were not due to begin till the 26th. Then the business of gaining contact with the bands, dispersing them, and, if possible, arresting and disarming them, was to begin in earnest.

On the evening of the 22nd some reconnaissance parties well to the westward of the line of stops came in contact with a band moving north-eastward. Fire was opened by a few men forming the rear party of the band, but was not returned. On the 23rd bands seemed to have moved some miles westward to avoid military patrols. On the next day they turned eastward again, and, late in the evening in the dark, bumped into troops blocking the roads, and were fired on and driven back to

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the eastward again and followed up next morning.

These events roused the Higher Arab Committee to its fullest activity. It had been agitating for an amnesty for what it called the "men in the hills" for some time, mixed up with pleas on behalf of the lightermen of Jaffa, whose strike had done so much for the Jewish jetty at Tel Aviv. By the 24th, spurred on by news and protests from the District Committees in the hill areas, it was in full gallop to the rescue of the bands, particularly Fauzi and party. While stoutly maintaining that it had no control over the armed bands, it announced that the strike would begin all over again on the 26th unless the military operations in the hills were stopped. The armistice, it claimed, was being broken. The Arabs in the hills certainly were becoming excited and threatening to take up arms and rally to the rescue of those invaders from abroad, whom they regarded as their guests.

The attitude of the Higher Arab Committee suggested a pretty close connection between the political wing and the militant wing in the movement, in which both had a common aim. By threatening to renew the strike on the

## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

26th the Higher Arab Committee showed itself less squeamish about an ultimatum than the government of Palestine had ever been. It had never given the Mufti twenty-four hours in which to call off his strike. Now the government had twenty-four hours in which to call off its troops or take the consequences, one of which would be that the Royal Commission would have to unpack its bags and cancel its passages to Palestine. Both the armed bands and the government of Palestine were in a fix.

The government of Palestine seemed to be faced by a choice of evils. On the one hand, was the evil of letting the bands of armed invaders from abroad leave Palestine unscathed. They were clearly showing signs of a desire to go. On the other hand, was the evil of seeing the departure of the Royal Commission postponed once again by another outbreak of disorder. Presumably the first essential was that the Commission should come to Palestine without more delay and that all other considerations should stand aside. The situation seemed to leave no room for compromise. Either the troops had to be left free to arrest and disarm the bands, in which case Palestinian Arabs would have resisted, or the

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

bands from abroad had to be left free to depart. Half measures and the imposition of hampering restrictions on the action of the troops were, in the circumstances, out of the question.

Though the civil authorities had asked for military aid, they clearly did not want its consequences. Therefore, on the afternoon of the 25th, as soon as that fact became apparent, the operations were cancelled. The troops already out returned to their stations and those due to move on the 26th never went forth.

The news that the way was clear soon reached Fauzi. On the night of the 25th, with a large party of armed men and escorted by Palestinian Arabs, he crossed the Jordan, south of Beisan, into Transjordan. On the 26th the Arab Press was full of protests and veiled threats of a renewal of disorders. The papers announced that the Higher Arab Committee had lodged protests with the government and warned it of the state of Arab feeling. But by that time the troops were all back in their quarters and Fauzi and his men were in Transjordan. There they remained for about ten days, still in British mandated territory, and it became the turn of the Amir of Transjordan to do what he could to persuade the party to move on. In

## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

their own good time they moved eastward across the desert and entered Iraq whence they had come. The armistice then reverted to normal and the Royal Commission sailed for Palestine.

In support of such methods of government, it can be said that conciliation having gone so far already, the only thing to do was to see it through to the bitter end. But the end was more than bitter, it was illegal. These bands from abroad had come into Palestine for a purpose. In attempting to achieve the purpose for which they had banded themselves together, some members of the bands killed servants of the British Government. That was murder, so all, being banded together, were liable to be tried for murder if caught. To let murderers escape, when it is known that they are murderers and when they can be stopped, is an offence.

It may sound illogical to suggest that it was wrong to let Fauzi and his men escape and then go on to suggest that it would have been better to let them off by making an agreement with the Arab leaders equivalent to an armistice and amnesty. The forces of the government and the forces of the Arabs in Palestine had

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

been in conflict for months. The conflict ended by the Arab leaders calling on their followers to stop breaking the laws. It may be said that no agreement or treaty of armistice was necessary. Submission to government and the laws of the land was all that was required of the Arabs. But there were any number of points outstanding between the British and the Arabs quite distinct from the problems facing the Royal Commission when the vague undefined armistice began on the 12th of October. An agreement would have cleared them all up, and everyone would have known where he stood. Instead, the government stuck to all its rights, went half-way to using them, and then backed out, spreading the process over months, during which nobody knew where he stood. The point will stand out more clearly if, what might have been done, is tested against what was done.

We might have said to the Arabs on the 12th of October that we wanted to forget the past ; that we would treat all the men captured during the rebellion as if they were prisoners of war and would release them ; that all persons interned would be released ; that all armed bands must disperse by a given time ; that

## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

armed men from abroad must collect at a given place and stay there, till arrangements were completed for their departure from the country with their arms; that the Arab leaders must agree to take action in concert with the government to ensure control of arms in the Arab parts of Palestine. With regard to the matters to be investigated by the Royal Commission, there would be no change in policy or in practice, till after the report of the Commission had been completed and the British Government had made its decisions. Meanwhile there must be no intimidation, boycott, or agitation in the Press. If the Arab leaders refused to agree to terms of that kind, they should be subjected to intensive measures. If they agreed, a Committee with representatives of both sides should be set up to make the agreement work.

What was done in Palestine was, first, the persons interned were released. That was only right; there were no charges against them. Then came the muddle over the armed bands and Fauzi and his foreigners, which has already been described. Then, some weeks later, the courts succeeded at last in condemning to death some half-dozen Arabs who had either killed British soldiers or police, or had been

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

captured in armed action against them. The Arabs who had been condemned to death were then allowed to appeal to the Judicial Committee in London, which, in due course, refused to intervene. Then in March 1937 the High Commissioner reprieved them and commuted their sentences to imprisonment. Then Arabs in prison for offences connected with the rebellion went on hunger strike, and in May 1937 about a hundred were released. Many had already released themselves by escaping, either from prison or from their guards while at work.

While these events were taking place the courts in Palestine released another body of Arabs, up for trial on charges connected with the rebellion. The judges held that the September Order in Council had cancelled the authority under which the emergency regulations had been made. The Arabs in question were, however, charged under the emergency regulations, which were now deemed to have no legal standing. So they were released. Then the March 1937 Order in Council put the emergency regulations back into force again.

It is not surprising that these very peculiar methods of governing should be glossed over



## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

rather than frankly confessed. On the 24th of May 1937 the Secretary of State for the Colonies referred to the Arab prisoners who had gone on hunger strike. He said: "There has been no case of major disorder in recent weeks, and the only other important incident to be reported is that, on May the 11th, 196 persons detained in the Farm Labour Camp at Acre, under the Crime (Prevention) Ordinance and the Emergency Regulations, declared a hunger strike as a protest against their preventive detention. The hunger strike ended on May the 15th, and was not attended by any disorder."

It required a question to get a little nearer to the truth. The question was: "Was the hunger strike terminated because the prisoners were released according to the news given in 'The Times' three or four days ago, or are they still in detention?" To that question the reply was: "I understand that some of them are still in detention. They were in preventive detention under the Prevention of Crime Order. I understand that some of them have been released."

In fact, about a hundred prisoners had been released, as reported in 'The Times.' But that did not satisfy the Arabs. On the 4th of June

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the Arabs organised a strike in the Northern District, with the object of bringing pressure to bear on the government to release the remainder of the prisoners.

There is little proof that the policy of conciliation has succeeded in conciliating. It seems instead to have induced among the Arabs a feeling of arrogance and complete contempt for the government of Palestine. There is little evidence that the art of yielding has been applied in accordance with the principles of that art, which requires that the energy and strength of the adversary should be turned against him. The yielding of the government of Palestine has been just plain yielding. There is nothing to show that the exercise of political pressure by the government on the Arab leaders has been as effective as the exercise of political pressure by the leaders on it. They have forced the government grudgingly to give an armistice and an amnesty. It has taken the Arab leaders nearly nine months to get the Arab prisoners out of prison.

It would surely have been cleaner, clearer, more magnanimous, and more dignified to have made an agreement on the 12th of October 1936, amounting to an armistice and amnesty,

## ARMISTICE—ARMED BANDS AND AMNESTY

with conditions. It is common-sense to have something in writing when two parties have been in fierce dispute for months, and both agree to pause, pending submission of the main issues to judgment. If nothing is made in writing, each party will accuse the other of not pausing.

The question, what should be done by a government at the end of a sub-war, requires consideration, just as much as the use by a government of the four parts of rule, in face of sub-war, needs examination in order to make it more effective than it is. One thing stands out, that the methods adopted by the government of Palestine since the middle of last October were wrong methods, which have achieved little beyond undermining respect for government.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS.

THE Royal Commission arrived in Jerusalem on the 11th of November 1936 and left Palestine in the middle of January 1937, to complete its labours in London. By the time that it arrived troops were already leaving the country, and by the time that it left all had gone but five battalions of the reinforcements from England, in addition to the normal garrison of two battalions and the squadrons and armoured cars of the Royal Air Force. Command of this new garrison remained in the hands of a general officer of the Army. Thus, by the 1st of January 1937, the state of affairs produced by the rebellion had made it necessary for Britain to deplete the garrison of England by five battalions and put them in Palestine, where they still remain.

The last of the reinforcing troops sent out from England in the September rush, when the

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

Cabinet suddenly reaffirmed its mysterious previous decision, did not reach Palestine till after the rebellion was over. The first of them to leave for home, including all the reservists, began the return journey just before Christmas. The business of pouring troops into Palestine, and the final effort of rushing a division there from England and then rushing it back again, cost a lot of money, and the British taxpayer will have to pay most of it.

The comfortable balance of some £5,000,000, which the Government of Palestine had piled up over a period of years, had vanished by 1937 in paying the price of rebellion, by providing accommodation for the troops, hiring transport for their use, repairing damage to railways and roads, and compensating owners for loss, damage, or hire of their property. There was just enough money left in the country to meet the normal liabilities of the year to come. The battle to decide how much Palestine will pay and how much the British taxpayer will pay is no doubt now in full swing. A curious feature of the situation is, that most of what Palestine will pay will be paid by the Jews.

It will always remain a debatable point whether the policy of rushing troops about as a

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

bluff was a good one. It is always wiser to win wars without fighting battles, if possible. It is foolish to lose many good men killed and wounded if the object can be attained another way. But the object must be attained. The object, on occasions when the other side resorts to force to inflict its will on us, is to make it submit to our will.

It is not yet clear what our will was in October 1936, when the rebellion was stopped by the Arab leaders. It seems that it was firstly to get enough peace in Palestine to make it possible for the Royal Commission to work in the country; then to get the Royal Commission out there to begin its work; then to wait till the Commission advised the Cabinet as to what our will should be regarding the future government of the country. We attained the first, and so also the second, of these objects when the Arab leaders stopped the rebellion unconditionally. But no conditions were imposed by us on the Higher Arab Committee, and no agreement was signed and no pledges were made for peace and good behaviour during the long wait for the report of the Royal Commission. In fact, our will was not what the Cabinet said it was in early September 1936—

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

namely, to re-establish British authority in Palestine. We have not yet done that, and we have not yet imposed our will on the Arab leaders.

If our immediate object in September 1936 was to get the strike and disorders stopped, it is open to question whether the rush of reinforcements which began in that month impelled the Arab leaders to a decision in October. It seems probable that the natural desire of the Arabs to provide for the immediate future had a great deal to do with the ending of the strike. They are an agricultural people and so influenced by the seasons. They wished to till their fields in time for the rains and wished to make money by picking and packing their citrus crops. At that time they expected to make money because they thought that Spain would be out of the citrus market. In fact, by October the season for rebellion had come to an end.

It is difficult to see much point in the rush of the 1st Division to Palestine and difficult to see any point in dragging the reservists away from their employments. The rebellion was over before the last units of the reinforcing division reached Palestine. The fighting and defending

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

done in September was done by the troops already in the country. During the ten days in which the rebellion extended into October the troops of the 1st Division were only engaged in one skirmish. Their occupation of the Southern District did, however, enable the 5th Division to be more concentrated and effective in the northern half of the country.

If the object was to bluff, the method employed was clumsy and expensive. The bluffing would have been done just as well and much more cheaply by threatening to impose martial law with the troops already in the country, unless the Higher Arab Committee accepted given terms by a given date. The trouble about the bluff which was employed was that it was vague in purpose. There seems to have been no clear idea why the 1st Division was rushed to Palestine, whether it was to re-establish British authority or to bluff the Arab leaders into stopping their strike. The British Government had not even made up its mind regarding the form which emergency rule was to take till a fortnight after the bulk of the rushed reinforcements had reached their destinations. If the object was to get Palestine peaceful enough for the Royal Commission and not to bother



## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

about re-establishing British authority, then the ripening oranges, the Arab kings, the threat of martial law, and the troops on the spot should have been good enough cards with which to win that trick.

The failure to arrive at any form of agreement in October 1936 with the Arab leaders regarding the peace of Palestine, pending the Report of the Royal Commission, has proved bad for Britain. The period of suspense or armistice has lasted months. During all that time nothing has been done about disarming the country, because the Arab leaders would have claimed a breach of the armistice had an attempt been made by the government to secure even reasonable control of arms. By letting the rebellion end in a negative way, the Arabs agreeing not to do something, instead of making it end in a positive way, Britain insisting on agreement to her terms, two valuable bargaining points for future good behaviour have been lost.

The fate of Fauzi and his men was one point, and the fate of the Arab prisoners was another. Use might have been made of these points to secure better control of Arab activities, which have gone sadly out of control since temporarily

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

checked at the ending of the rebellion. Instead, it was the Arab leaders who got Fauzi and his men out of Palestine unscathed, and, by the exercise of political pressure, have got most of the prisoners of the rebellion out of jail as well. The government has never gained control of arms, of intimidation, of funds collected by methods of intimidation, or of propaganda by the Arabs and their foreign advisers. In fact, the armistice has been used successfully by the Arabs to consolidate their position, exercise political pressure on the government of Palestine, and present a more formidable front to Britain should she ever decide to rule the country.

It surely should not require a Royal Commission to tell any government anywhere in the Empire that it must control arms in the territory which it claims to govern. It surely cannot have been the intention that nothing should be done in the matter of arms control in Palestine till after the report of the Royal Commission was published. The illegal possession of arms is the basis of intimidation. The rebellion showed the disadvantages of failure to control arms. The police have done what they could to seize arms, in the ordinary course of duty, since the

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

rebellion. But no determined effort has been made to disarm the inhabitants of Palestine who hold arms illegally, whether Jews or Arabs or anyone else.

It is possible that the view of the government was, that it would be more fair to continue to rule as before the rebellion, till after the Report of the Royal Commission was out and the decisions on it made known. It may have considered that if it took steps immediately after the rebellion to control arms, the use of force would have become necessary and the state of the country would have become disturbed again. As no action regarding strict control of arms had been taken during the years preceding the rebellion, it might have appeared that control was intended as a punishment, if imposed immediately after. If that was the reason for doing nothing, it is strange that the policy of rule in Palestine after the rebellion was not consistent. The policy of making no changes in methods of rule should have been applied to all matters which might be affected by the Report of the Royal Commission. One of these matters was Jewish immigration.

There is some mystery regarding the policy which has governed Jewish immigration since

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

the rebellion. In April 1936 the half-yearly labour quota was 4500. In November 1936 it sank to 1800, and in May 1937 it sank again to 770. The policy is supposed to be governed by the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals. It is difficult to believe that economic capacity to absorb has sunk in one year to one-sixth of what it was in April 1936. There are no visible signs in Palestine of such a sudden change. The Jews asked that the half-yearly quota for May 1937 should be 11,500 immigrants, but as a race they are not shy about asking for things.

The matter has been raised by question in the House of Commons in May 1937, but the answers of the Secretary of State for the Colonies leave it still in doubt whether the economic capacity of the country to absorb remains the determining factor, or whether the will of the High Commissioner now decides the half-yearly quota. In replies to a number of questions on the subject the Secretary of State said on the 26th of May: "There has been no change of policy, and in fixing the Schedule at this figure the High Commissioner had been guided solely by the usual criteria by which he assessed the economic absorptive capacity of

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

the country." Then, after answering two more questions, he said: "It was clearly laid down in the MacDonald letter of 1930 that every six months it is the responsibility of the High Commissioner to fix the number under the Schedule."

It seems that the policy was to keep Palestine quiet at all costs till after the Report of the Royal Commission is out. If that assumption is correct, then it is a pity that the question of Jewish immigration was not made a third bargaining point last October in order to screw pledges of good behaviour out of the Arabs. As things have turned out, it looks as if they, by bad behaviour, have screwed concessions out of the government of Palestine.

The Arabs have behaved badly since October 1936, when they called off their strike unconditionally. The policy of keeping Palestine quiet at all costs and glossing things over to make it appear quieter than it really is, has played into their hands and encouraged them to exert pressure on the government by disturbing the country. When matters in dispute are under judgment, certain standards of conduct are expected of all the parties interested, and sometimes these standards are enforced by

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

punishment for contempt of court. The Arab leaders began by boycotting the Royal Commission mainly because the government of Palestine in November 1936 admitted 1800 Jewish immigrants in the second half-yearly quota of that year of rebellion. A complete stoppage of Jewish immigration had been one of the Arab demands, and they were annoyed at this advertisement of their failure.

It was not till the Royal Commission was on the point of leaving the country in January 1937 that the Higher Arab Committee decided, once more on the advice of the Arab kings, to give evidence. There is not much point in emphasising the extreme nature of the Arab claims made in open session. They were addressed to an audience larger than the Royal Commission. The Jews had done just the same when it was their turn, and their claims had been as extreme. While the Arabs demanded the termination of the period of mandatory rule, a treaty between Great Britain and Palestine and the establishment of an independent national government, constitutionally elected, the Jews seemed to think that the field for the Zionist experiment should be extended to include Transjordan.

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

While extreme claims in a competition of such importance to each side were only to be expected and were quite in order, the Arabs overstepped the mark in three directions by their actions while the dispute was under judgment. The collection of funds for 'distressed Palestine' was carried out by methods similar to those employed by the racketeer. Large sums were collected under pressure from firms as well as from individuals. There was always the threat of the gun. At the same time pressure was exerted on individuals, and sometimes there was the use of the gun. Lists were prepared locally of officials, particularly Arab police, who had been active in support of order and law, and of individuals who had not been noticeably active in support of the Arab cause. Some of these individuals were notified from time to time how they stood on the list. It was not all just theatrical bluff. In the first three months of 1937 there were 162 cases of serious crime, mostly political, in that small country with a population of just over one and a quarter million.

In the first quarter of 1937 the situation in the Northern District, where terrorism was most rampant, had become grave. Arab attacks

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

on Jews increased, and in one or two places Arab organisations, by methods of terrorism, extended the boycott of Jews to such lengths, that they virtually ruled by the power of the gun, restricting movement and levying taxes of their own invention. Then disorder spread south, and there was an outbreak of bomb-throwing in Jerusalem.

In the second half of March the Mufti, who had been visiting Mecca, returned somewhat mysteriously to Jerusalem, and the High Commissioner arrived back from London. The situation, then at its worst, soon improved, and has remained just bearable since. The price which Britain has had to pay for a pause, though one hardly peaceful enough to deserve the description, has been heavy. Many of the difficulties which have arisen have been due to failure to make the Arab leaders sign terms last October. As a result, there has been lack of control over them, and the departure of the invaders under Fauzi, the release of the Arab prisoners and the reductions in the number of Jewish immigrants, and other acts and omissions, have all given the impression of yielding by Britain to threats of violence.

The Higher Arab Committee has not confined



## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

its activities to the narrow limits of Palestine. It has tried to extend the area of pressure on Britain. On the 8th of February 1937 the document given below, a foreword to a Memorandum submitted to the Royal Commission, printed in Arabic and in English, was sent all over the world as well as throughout Palestine. The document speaks for itself and shows what difficulties face an umpire, predisposed to conciliation rather than to sanctions, in pursuit of peace with justice.

### TO THE ARAB PEOPLE AND THE MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN WORLDS.

“ The Arab Higher Committee makes public through this pamphlet the text of the Memorandum submitted by the Arabs of Palestine to the British Royal Commission, which came here to investigate the fundamental causes of the 1936 disturbances and the Palestine problem in general.

“ In making this statement, the Arab Higher Committee calls the attention of the whole world, and particularly the Moslem and Arab peoples, to the dangers of the tragedy that is

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

being inflicted on the Arabs of Palestine to-day. The country is subjected to every aspect of imperialistic rule. Jews from the four corners of the earth are being crowded into it, and arriving, are given complete mastery over its original inhabitants. The Legislative, Administrative, and Political departments of our country's rule, contrary to all laws of logic and principles of justice and sane economy, are being exploited in the interests of the Zionist policy. All this is being forced upon us in utter disregard of the Arab right to a national existence, and carried out with terrorisation and threats to our very means of life.

"The Arabs have for the past eighteen years denounced this policy of despotism, and protested thereagainst by every peaceful method at their command. They demanded no more than justice. But the British Government has consistently and resolutely turned a deaf ear to their petitions, wholly ignoring their grievances and their rightful demands. It has unbrokenly pursued a policy in which ignorance and despotism are enshrined. This inevitably has led to the series of riots and disturbances which culminated in the widespread outbreak in the summer of 1936. Then it was that the

## ARMISTICE WITHOUT CONDITIONS

Arabs of all ranks, in city and village alike, declared their remonstrance in a strike which lasted for half a year. Every sphere of activity was affected thereby, and the country was subjected to bloodshed, death, and imprisonment. The Arabs faced these tragedies bravely, with hearts full of faith and minds serene with patience. Nothing could better prove how deeply they felt the wounds of imperialism, how grievously they were aware of a danger which threatened not only their national life, but their bodily existence, even in the shadow of a ruthless despotism.

"The Arabs of Palestine were made to face the mobilised forces of Imperial Britain and the insatiable ambitions of World Jewry. Nevertheless, though a mere handful, they have courageously stood their ground, and with unflinching hearts they have neither weakened nor let themselves be crushed. In spite of all this, however, being few in number and ill-equipped in the modern means of self-defence, they can never keep up their resistance if left to face these gigantic powers alone.

"Therefore they send out anew their call for aid to the Arab people, and to the whole world of Moslems and Christians. They must defend

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

their integrity against the imperialistic net set out for them, and save themselves from the harms and dangers that hang above their heads. They call upon their brethren to see that Great Britain desist from pursuing this inhuman encroachment and oppression which denies them all things ; that Great Britain grant to the Arabs their natural and political rights ; that World Jewry shall learn that Palestine is not friendless and alone in this world struggle, but is still the centre of hope and aspiration of Arabs, Moslems, and Christians from all the corners of the earth ; that the Arab people and the Moslem world shall take no rest until they are assured that Palestine shall maintain for ever its Arab character and blood."

HEADQUARTERS,  
ARAB HIGHER COMMITTEE,  
JERUSALEM.

*February 8, 1937.*

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE PURPOSE.

THE decisions of the Royal Commission on Palestine have now been issued. Soon the final judgment on the future of the country will have been delivered. Deliveries of judgment create situations no sooner created than reactions to them begin to take shape. Some people dislike a judgment, some loathe it, and some regard it as an outrageous breach of promise. Then comes the question, what is to be done: submit to the judgment, submit a new grievance to judgment if there is a new grievance, or appeal to force? In the case of India judgment has been delivered, and in the case of Palestine it soon will be. The answer in each case should be submission to the decision of the judges. No other answer fits the purpose of British rule, which requires that disputes shall be submitted to judgment and that the decision of the judges shall be loyally accepted.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

The British Empire is too often praised as a wonderfully vague, indefinite, successful thing, a puzzle to foreigners, who fail to understand why it works. It is high time that the emphasis on the vague and on the indefinite aspects of its nature stopped. It is neither vague nor indefinite. To go on emphasising vagueness only does the Empire harm by surrounding its purpose with fog. Without a clear purpose there can be no impulse in a definite direction and no cohesion among those who should work together.

There are three Empires : the Commonwealth Empire, the Colonial Empire, and the Indian Empire and Burma. The spirit which animates the Commonwealth Empire is the spirit of free and loyal co-operation by unequals in service to something greater than self. The States of that Empire are free and self-governing. The States in the other two Empires are not yet freely self-governing, but the aim is that they should progress to that degree and then be animated by the spirit which animates the Commonwealth Empire. The spirit requires in practice that disputes be submitted to judgment, and that the decision of the judges be loyally accepted. It is a tall order, but the higher the

## THE PURPOSE

aim the greater the effort to reach up. It is only natural that, with so many peoples in so many different stages of development in one organisation, there should be great variety of constitutions and forms of rule, but there is nothing vague about the purpose.

There is nothing new in free and loyal co-operation by unequals in service to something greater than self. But the co-operation must be free to accord with the spirit which animates the British purpose. Regimented co-operation is not the same thing. In nations governed by the regimental system the individual in the ranks may wish to speak, to assert his individual view of truth, to point what he believes a better way. But, being regimented, he thinks that he alone wishes to step out of the ranks to raise his voice. All the others about him seem to be doing the same things, in the same way, at the word of command. There is no sign among them of desire for change. If they glance at him they will see him doing the same things in the same way, at the word of command, and no sign in him of desire for change. So he just cannot step out of the ranks, and in the ranks he remains, co-operating, but not freely.

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

Democracy allows free co-operation, other very efficient systems do not. Those who believe in the other systems dislike democracy, because they see in it an almost chaotic freedom and very little sign of co-operation. That is a point which requires attention on our part, to ensure that there is balance between freedom and co-operation. The freedom is a means to a better type of co-operation and not an end in itself. What is new in the British system of free and loyal co-operation is the spirit which animates the purpose, obedience to the principles of peace, as well as its international scale. Too often the size of the thing rather than the spirit receives the emphasis. Britain and other States in the Empire have between them hoist civilisation one step higher. The problem is to stay there, and the longer we stay, the more hope there is that others may come up too.

We have a high purpose and a very long way to go to reach it in a field, in the Empire alone, wide enough to engage all our energies for generations. The difficulties are enormous. The first difficulty is to get the purpose properly understood. The purpose is peace in a practical form, based on the principles of life and on the principles of peace ; in fact, life with peace.



## THE PURPOSE

Yet there are thousands of people in Britain who spend their time obscuring the purpose for political reasons. They say that the Empire is governed by methods which are imperialist, capitalist, and militarist. They say, in fact, that some of us dominate other peoples by force in order to make money out of them. Yet their own purpose is to divide peoples everywhere into two opposed groups, one consisting of few who possess much, and the other of many who possess little. Their purpose is to divide and rule, and that is not the way to peace. In fact, they are imperialists of the old dominating type, and dwell a step below us on civilisation's staircase.

There is difficulty also regarding the submission of disputes to judgment. We still have strikes in Britain, and strikes are a form of appeal to force. In spite of those who say that force decides nothing, that form of force has done a great deal of good by securing a fairer distribution of wealth. But now the arrangements for hearing both sides in dispute are so much improved, that it is time to make a clear distinction between strikes and 'strikes.' Some so-called strikes reveal the existence of a type of mind which would not submit a dispute to judgment if it

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

thought that it could get more by the use of force.

The truth is that there are genuine men and racketeers about. A strike which is staged at a time so inconvenient to other interests that submission to the strikers' demands is expected by them, on that account, is a racket. The Arab 'strike' in Palestine was a similar racket on a larger scale. The part of their case, which was genuine, could easily have been settled by submission to judgment. The rest of it, and that is the bulk of it, was an attempt made at an inconvenient time to force Britain out of Palestine and leave the Arabs there in control to dominate the population. The Italian conquest of Abyssinia was another racket of just the same type on a still greater scale. The attitude of mind was similar in all three cases. That attitude of mind cannot be allowed to translate its thoughts into deeds with impunity if the British purpose is to be achieved.

The science of racketeering has made great strides since 1918, and has taken full advantage of the British predilection for conciliation. Conciliation is useless in dealing with certain types of mind, which are only influenced by a

## THE PURPOSE

choice of evils. Conciliation, which allows low standards of conduct to pass unchallenged, encourages the racketeer and resort to force. It is essential, therefore, that neither a 'strike' nor an armistice like the Palestinian model of 1936 should be allowed at all. To allow them to take root and flourish means that leaders of the local people, who are genuine and capable of co-operation and compromise, become dominated by racketeering leaders who are capable of neither. If we behave as we did in Palestine, and sink to ruminating about our purpose in an armchair instead of taking it with us up the hill against the wind, it will soon receive no more respect than the hobby of an old man, who cannot stop talking about it.

Our relations with the people of the Irish Free State are an example of the difficulty in achieving free co-operation. But they look like ourselves, live next door to us, speak our language reluctantly, and live very nearly as we do. It is bound to be more difficult to achieve co-operation from peoples, thousands of miles away, whose lives, languages, and customs differ completely from ours. The links are either community of interest in service to something greater than self for some competitive purpose,

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

as Germany, Austria, and Turkey were linked in 1914, or a common desire to co-operate freely and loyally for peace. The British imperial purpose is not to create alliances in order to be stronger in competition, but to create a spirit in order to be stronger in co-operation.

In order to avoid having to compromise with public enemies, a closer study of the methods of the racketeer is required. Then British rule may be brought up to date and a system of emergency rule devised, capable of bringing the extremist up with a jerk should he venture to resort to force. It is curious that sanctions should be so prominently displayed to law-abiding citizens on the back of an income-tax declaration, with threats of six months' hard labour for keeping what the State claims as due to it, when citizens in States under our rule can organise and execute armed rebellion without any suggestion of sanctions at all. It is time that we demanded higher standards of political conduct from some of those whom we are leading along the road to self-government, and time that we took effective steps to get them.

In that respect we have failed in Palestine, and seem to be doing little better in India.

## THE PURPOSE

We have now admitted that Jews and Arabs will not co-operate. We have admitted that we have failed as a link between them in spite of all our sweet reasonableness and patience in trying to persuade each community to co-operate with us. We have now admitted that sweet reasonableness is not enough in the international sphere and are at last rearming at a pace set to ensure that rearmament shall not upset industry. That is not unlike setting out from a bad start in an important race under strict instructions to breathe only through the nose.

We have not yet admitted that there was anything wrong with our administration in Palestine, nor have we reached the threshold of admission that our methods of dealing with modern rebellion are comic. But, just as foreign nations have rearmed and made us divert money, reluctantly, from social services to defence services, so have extremists under our rule rearmed themselves with new methods of resisting it. It is time that we rearmed ourselves with new methods of ruling.

It is quite clear now that in Palestine neither Arabs nor Jews will get all of their extreme claims, whatever happens. Whether the de-

## BRITISH RULE, AND REBELLION

cision be partition or something else, there will be a general lining up for a fresh start. We might as well join the party and line up too. It looks as if we might have to do something to enforce a decision. Possibly, in a pause in the shouting of rival claims, we might venture the suggestion that we have interests in Palestine, such as the port of Haifa, with enough land behind it to make it safe, and the line of railway joining it to the Suez Canal. Possibly we might manage to keep clear of that centre of discord, the Holy City, by controlling its food, water, and light from a distance.

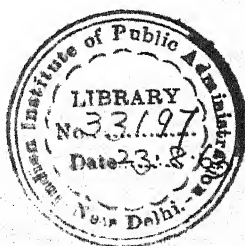
Now is the time for us to make up our minds what we propose to do after we line up for a fresh start. Are we going to continue to shut ourselves up in an island sanctuary, walled in behind theories, blushing at the thought of force in any form, or are we about to step out and face realities in our own wide sphere of rule? Though we live in an island, half of those in it depend on overseas connections for food. Our industrial heart-beat just manages to supply them; an agricultural heart-beat would leave about twenty million unfed. All the work we have done in improving social conditions inside the island depends on ability to go on defending

## THE PURPOSE

those vital overseas connections. We have no intention of using force to attack and get more, because we have more than enough to manage already. We cannot let foreigners attack the outlying parts of the Empire, because of the effect on our stomachs. It seems equally reasonable to resist attack from within by extremists.

We forget and forgive readily. But surely two lessons stand out to be remembered from the history of rebellion against our rule since 1918. The first is the need to deal promptly with resort to force in the interests of peace and of the submission of disputes to judgment. The second is the need for better co-ordination of the four parts of rule to ensure swift and effective action.

The author, in conclusion, acknowledges with gratitude the kind permission of the Controller, H.M. Stationery Office, to quote from the Palestine Royal Commission Report, and of the Management of 'The Times,' to quote from the leading article of the 25th January 1937, "The Palestine Inquiry."



*Printed in Great Britain by*  
**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS LTD.**